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SMALL TOWN

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## EDITOR'S PREFACE

To many the writing of a book upon the small town will seem to be a work of supererogation. To them the facts about Main Street and its inhabitants are already only too well known. A childhood and youth of village life or even a casual visit suffices to provide them with all that is to be known about the small town.

But the materials presented on "Mineville" show how close and how far from the facts these popular impressions may be. For this book presents a total picture of the intimate aspects of village life sensed perhaps but not fully appreciated by its oldest inhabitants and only in part approximated in the literature. Earlier sociological inquiries<sup>1</sup> have dealt largely with the history and the formal organization and customary behavior of community life. Fiction,<sup>2</sup> it is true, has entered into the thoughts and feelings of the residents of the small town, but has concentrated upon a few selected characters with only incidental reference to the total drama of community life. It was with the purpose of obtaining a picture of the small-town community as a whole and as revealed by penetration into the inner lives of its members that this study was undertaken.

To make an intimate inquiry into the inner life of a small-town community required a rather unusual combination of

<sup>1</sup> J. M. Williams, *An American Town* (New York, 1906); W. H. Wilson, *Quaker Hill* (New York, 1907); N. L. Sims, *Hoosier Village* (New York, 1912).

<sup>2</sup> Representative literary pictures of American small-town life are presented in Sinclair Lewis, *Main Street*; Edgar Lee Masters, *Spoon River Anthology*; Booth Tarkington, *A Gentleman from Indiana*; and G. P. Hummel, *Sub-soil*.

qualifications in the investigator. It was desirable, perhaps necessary, that he be a resident, in order to appreciate the meaning of relationships and events in the community. It was quite, if not more important, that he be sufficiently detached from the town and its life to look at it with some objectivity and sophistication. Finally, it seemed to be advantageous for him to be in command of some of the techniques now available for community inquiry.

The chief worker in the study and the author of this volume possessed in greater or less degree these three requisites. He lived in Mineville while the study was in progress and participated in the variety of experiences that make up town life. With six years of undergraduate and graduate training, he brought to the study of the community something of the detachment and perspective of an outsider. Through his sociological studies he had acquired a point of view and some familiarity with methods of research to guide him in the unusual adventure of studying one's own community.

The techniques employed in this study, while rather simple, called for skill and resourcefulness. The general approach was that of the "participant observer."<sup>1</sup> In the natural relationships of community life Mr. Blumenthal participated as a member of the different organizations of the community. To those groups from which he was barred by his age, sex, and family status he gained vicarious access through the aid of individuals whom he took into his confidence as to the purpose and scope of the study. To the community in general he was known to be writing his doctoral dissertation upon the social history and organizations of the community.

The most valuable data he obtained by this approach

<sup>1</sup> See Edward Lindeman, *Social Discovery*, pp. 191-200.



were the personal documents secured in the course of conversations often lasting for several hours and continued over the course of several months. Many of these were in whole or in part of an intimate and personal type, and recorded as nearly as possible in the person's own words. Taken together they constitute the main original sources upon which this volume is based.

Other subsidiary techniques were employed with greater or less success. For a year a daily diary was faithfully kept of community events. Rather commonplace statistical summaries were obtained on the membership and the attendance of the different organizations in the community. In the absence of statistical records many of these were taken from the estimates reported by officers of these organizations. In a community of fifteen hundred souls statistics too often seem a needless refinement of facts obvious to everyone.

A house-to-house canvass launched for the purpose of securing formal statistical data was abandoned shortly after it was begun. Such a venture, likely to encounter the running fire of gossip, should have been planned so as to be completed, if possible, in one day's time.

Some data were plotted upon maps, but this method was not extensively employed.

The main method relied upon was, in short, that of friendly conversation, in which the other person communicates his experiences, feelings, and attitudes much as if he were talking to himself. This is essentially the method which Charles H. Cooley has named "sympathetic introspection." But it was something more in that chief reliance is here placed upon the documents obtained rather than upon the interpretation given to the materials.

In fitting professional spirit, Mr. Blumenthal has em-

ployed throughout the volume a system of disguises to emphasize the point that the persons depicted are composite portraits. The characters in this study are to be thought of not as identifiable individuals but as representative of the types of people who may be found in any of the three thousand incorporated communities with one thousand to twenty-five hundred population in the United States. It must be kept in mind that the study is primarily of the small town, and only by way of illustration, of Mineville.

The result of the use of this method is an authentic document, typical in varying degrees of every small American community. The details will of course vary, and vary widely. But the main characteristics of small-town life stand out in clear perspective: close acquaintanceship of everyone with everyone else, the dominance of personal relations, and the subjection of the individual to continuous observation and control by the community. These are essentially what are referred to by the phrase "small-town stuff."

Close acquaintanceship, or intimacy of an external sort, appears to be a chief differential characteristic of social relationships in the small town. "Everyone knows everything about everyone else," but this community knowledge is generally concerned with the objective behavior rather than with the subjective life of the individual. The person as known by his fellows is not the individual as he appears to himself but an abstraction, a stereotype, created by the community as a result of constant evaluation and reevaluation of his external behavior.

This fund of concrete knowledge which everyone has of everyone else in the small town naturally emphasizes and accentuates the rôle of the personal in all relationships and activities of community life. Approval and disapproval of

conduct, likes and dislikes of persons, play correspondingly a tremendous part in social life, in business, in politics, and in the administration of justice.

The dominance of "intimate face-to-face association" in the small town naturally entails as one consequence the almost absolute surveillance and control of the individual by the community. In the small town is to be seen in its elementary aspects the very process by which in personal interaction public opinion is formed which almost always enslaves and not infrequently destroys its creators.

The treatment and cure of this small-town "neurosis" which causes so much personal unhappiness and misery might well become the objective of community programs. Physicians trained in mental hygiene and ministers alive to the implications of the community gospel might in their psychiatric and theological training be sensitized to the problems of the inner and personal, but, nevertheless, quite real sufferings of the victims of community control.

It is this control of the residents of the small town by Mrs. Grundy and its repression of personal variation that its critics have been prone to magnify and to condemn. This study in seeking to understand the origin and function of control by gossip in the small community has prepared the way for its rational treatment. For what is exhibited here is, perhaps, not merely a matter of locality or size of population, but also a state of mind. Fortunately, the processes of social change are widening the social horizon of American small-town life. The automobile, the motion picture, the radio, as well as the daily newspapers, are rapidly bringing the outside world within the radius of the smallest village or most isolated hamlet.

Not unlike the anthropological studies of the present day,

this is, then, a study of a disappearing or at least a changing culture. It is therefore as timely and important to accumulate and preserve data upon community life in America as upon Australian aborigines or Indian tribes.

In conclusion, it is in point to call attention to Mr. Blumenthal's observation that the native of Gotham who comes to reside in Mineville soon finds himself in all essentials a small-town person.

E. W. BURGESS

## PREFACE

Not long since, American civilization was a small-town civilization, but time has wrought great changes. Each census shows that the city is becoming more and more important; that it is the cities which are growing and that the average small town is standing still or losing in population. Scattered over the length and breadth of the land are thousands of these small towns, some of them ultra-modern and others over a hundred years behind the times. But there are traits common to all of them which have been recognized from time immemorial and which are referred to in common parlance by the term "small-town stuff." In the present study an attempt is made to present typical manifestations of small-town stuff as well as a picture of a typical alert American small town. This town has a population of 1,410 and may be called "Mineville."

At the beginning of this study, I already had a broad background in the life of Mineville. During the two and one-half years of intensive investigation I sought to sample every phase of the community life, and have recorded the results of my labor in this volume—in so far as propriety, limited space, and my modest ability made possible. Aside from any sense of duty, I have been forced to move slowly and carefully to make every statement accurate, because the people of Mineville (taken collectively) know a great deal more about their town than I and hence are well qualified to criticize my work. In most of the many cases in which I have pointed out a trend without offering statistics, these people will know whether or not I have erred.

I take this occasion to thank the many generous residents of Mineville who gave their time and energy in the name of this study. Among individual persons, however, my greatest debt is to Professor Burgess, whose enthusiasm for the project and whose counsel and encouragement were a constant inspiration. An almost equal obligation I owe to Professor Wirth who read the manuscript and offered suggestions which led to extensive revisions. Others to whom especial acknowledgment must be made are Professors Park and Steiner, whose interest and stimulation led me to prepare the volume for publication; Miss Eveline Blumenthal, who read the manuscript and contributed many valuable suggestions; and my wife, Marie Cullen Blumenthal, who assisted in more ways than I can express.

ALBERT BLUMENTHAL

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### PART I. MINEVILLE IN PANORAMA

I. A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF MINEVILLE . . . . .	3
II. MEMORIES OF THE PAST . . . . .	16
III. WHAT MINEVILLE THINKS OF ITSELF . . . . .	31
IV. THE STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE . . . . .	52
V. THE ROUTINE OF LIFE . . . . .	74

### PART II. AGENCIES OF SOCIAL CONTROL

VI. HOW WELL THE PEOPLE KNOW ONE ANOTHER . . .	101
VII. GOSSIP . . . . .	128
VIII. WHAT THEY THINK OF ONE ANOTHER . . . . .	144
IX. THE PRINTED PAGE . . . . .	174
X. LAW ENFORCEMENT . . . . .	187

### PART III. GROUP LIFE IN MINEVILLE

XI. GLIMPSES OF THE FAMILY . . . . .	211
XII. FROM THE CRADLE TO HIGH SCHOOL . . . . .	226
XIII. YOUTH: FLAMING AND OTHERWISE . . . . .	244
XIV. ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHER GROUPS . . . . .	264

### PART IV. SOCIAL CHANGE

XV. SMALL-TOWN POLITICS . . . . .	295
XVI. THE VILLAGE SCHOOLS . . . . .	327
XVII. CHURCHES WITHOUT CONGREGATIONS . . . . .	343
XVIII. SICKNESS, AGE, AND DEATH . . . . .	360
XIX. THE CHANGING TOWN . . . . .	382
INDEX . . . . .	413





PART I  
MINEVILLE IN PANORAMA



6

## CHAPTER I

### A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF MINEVILLE<sup>1</sup>

Nestled in the Rocky Mountains, a mile above sea-level, is Mineville, unknown to most of the world but keenly conscious of itself. In 1865 its site was first visited by a white man who found gold- and silver-bearing ores on a mountain, which is partly within the northeastern corner of the present city limits. At the base of this "hill," for what an easterner would call a mountain is called a hill in Mineville, there was erected in 1867 the first quartz mill in a vast unexplored region—the recently wrecked Luck Mill. As a matter of course, the town grew up at the edge of the hill so that the men might be close to the place of their labors. And so it lies scattered over gulches and hillsides, when there was available, less than a mile to the west, the beautiful, level Stone Creek Valley.

The drainage waters of the immediate vicinity flow into and form Stone Creek, which furnishes irrigation water for the fertile fields of its long valley. About forty-five miles to the east is the perpetually snow-capped Continental Divide, which determines that the waters of the region shall drain into the Columbia and thence into the Pacific Ocean, rather than into the Missouri-Mississippi, which would convey them to the Gulf of Mexico.

#### A NEWCOMER'S FIRST VIEW OF THE TOWN

Upon first arriving in Mineville by train the newcomer will usually ride from the depot in "Reavley's bus" unless

<sup>1</sup> We are not using the true names of the town, of neighboring towns, or of any of the persons quoted in this volume.

he is met by a friend or a relative. After a ride of two blocks he receives his first view of Main Street, which lies at the bottom of a gulch about a mile in length. The half-mile of this main thoroughfare which must be traversed before he finds himself in the business district is lined with residences and empty lots. And once in the three Main Street blocks which comprise the business district our visitor will be surprised to discover the up-to-date hotel to which he is ushered as well as the thoroughly modern bank, bakery, butcher shop, drug store, and ice-cream parlor, and the equally modern groceries, garages, etc. For Mineville is progressive despite its unprepossessing appearance.

A stroll about town and a few well-directed questions will soon show the visitor that Minevillers place utility above beauty. When beauty is concerned civic pride is at low ebb, but when utilities are at issue Mineville justly deserves its reputation throughout the region for being a "live and progressive little town." There are some man-made places of beauty such as the courthouse, the high school, the Masonic hall, and a few homes; but, in the main, Mineville's claim to beauty rests in its mountain site. Indeed, the town will be found to rest in a background replete with masterpieces of the handiwork of nature which form striking contrast to the man-made contributions in the landscape. But attractive as the visitor may find irregularities of terrain as scenery, he will be at a loss to explain the selection of such an area for the site of a town when immediately adjoining there was available a beautiful level area.

Taking particular note of the homes, our stranger will observe that very few of them are modern in type and that very little pride is taken in attractive premises by most of the residents. The antiquated architecture is to be explained by

the fact that most of the houses were built during the boom days between 1889 and 1893, since which time there has been occasion for few new homes. Then most of the people prefer not to spend much money in "fixing up" their homes because real estate values are very low, owing to lack of faith in the stability of the town. In many cases, lack of pride in attractive premises is caused mainly by the inadequacy of the water supply during August and by the discouragingly short growing season of from sixty to eighty days. The stranger's heart will go out to those who fondly nurse flower beds, well knowing that a frost in mid-August may spell doom. Mineville, after all, has her lovers of flowers, vegetable patches, and lawns. What these people accomplish is a measure of heroism.

Here and there will be seen a well-kept home with an attractive lawn and fine trees—perhaps the dwelling of a leading citizen. Such homes tend to be furnished in the best of modern taste, but so do many which have needed painting for many years and stand amid luxuriant weeds. In fact, the interior of the average Mineville dwelling stands in striking contrast to its exterior. For as a rule it is clean and well furnished, according to the various economic and cultural levels of the people; and even when poorly furnished it is cozy.

Having gained an inside picture of the town, the stranger may wish to see it in its larger physical setting; he may wish to see it from the point of vantage offered by the steep evergreen-covered mountain on the eastern edge of the "city limits." A bird's-eye view of the community from that point will impress him with the wide dispersion of homes over a square mile of large gulches, small gulches, hillsides, and level places. Then, as he surveys the long level stretch over which Mineville reigns as a trading center, he will be im-

pressed with the knowledge that the local trade area also encompasses another large farming section on the other side of the high mountains across the valley—Sand Creek Valley. All in all, he will face an interesting sight, and, at sunset, a most beautiful one.

#### THE VARIOUS PARTS OF TOWN

The main dividing line in the town is Broadway, which the people insist upon calling "Main Street." On one side of this street is the North Side and on the other, the South Side. The South Side is divided into part of the depot district, Barkerville, Roselle, part of the brewery district, and several unnamed neighborhoods. The North Side, although not so definitely districted by name in common usage, has many distinct neighborhoods. In fact, the majority of neighborhoods have no formal name, merely being referred to in current practice by saying, for example, "out by Knight's," "up by Mullen's," "by the courthouse," and the like.

In general, it may be said that hard-and-fast lines cannot be drawn as to the character of people to be found in the various parts of town. Well-to-do or socially prominent families are very much scattered residentially and so are those of different nationalities. The only characteristic types which may be distinguished by locality are the predominantly Italian population of Roselle, the strong Swedish and Finnish element in the depot district, the laboring-class element of Barkerville, and the business and professional class which will be found with but two exceptions to reside along Main Street or upon the North Side. But in no locality does one find a homogeneous population. On the contrary, locality means so little that a member of the élite may live in an elegantly furnished house next door to an Italian shanty and not suffer in status in the least.

## MAIN STREET

Architecturally, Main Street has little to distinguish it from the business centers of other small towns of its size and age. Of buildings occupied or partially occupied for business or public purposes, there are thirty of one story, fifteen of two stories, and two of three stories in height. Counting one undesirable empty location, there is a total of forty-eight distributed into thirty brick and eighteen frame structures.

Not a panacea for sore eyes architecturally, as an automobile thoroughfare the street is often such that all of the ingenuity which motor-car-springs experts can muster will stand the automobilist in good stead. Indeed, several years ago a man was bounced out of a truck upon his head and killed when the vehicle hit one of Main Street's justly ridiculed ruts. But, however poor the street may be, it is usually lined with automobiles of good quality and it boasts excellent garages.

As is typical of gulch towns, the center of Mineville's business district is moving down the gulch. Successively, domination of Main Street has passed from the upper to the middle and finally to the lower of the three principal business blocks. The immediate cause for the last shift was the removal of the post-office to the lower block, the post-office being the busiest center in town during the afternoon when most of the shopping is done.

## MINEVILLE AND ITS AREA

In a study of this kind it may seem necessary to specify the area to be investigated. That is a difficult task because, considered municipally, the area will be defined by the city limits; then since Mineville is a county seat it might be extended to the county boundaries. On the other hand, the



business man will be concerned with the trade area; while, from still another point of view, there is the "social area," that is, that territory over which a large amount of kinship ties and intimate personal contacts exist. In the present study the community will be thought of as a natural phenomenon, which may be seen from all of these points of view. That is, Mineville will be defined as a thing which in one phase falls within the city limits, in another reaches to the county boundaries, in another is trade area wide, and in still another is only accurately to be described in terms of that area over which kinship and friendship ties are characteristic.

The county area is nearly 2,000 square miles, or about one and three-quarters that of Rhode Island, while the population is less than two persons per square mile (3,000 in 1930). Mineville, with approximately half of this population, normally dominates the unit politically and economically, and there are strong friendship and kinship ties which further insure a county-community consciousness. However, Junction, with her four-hundred-odd residents twenty-eight miles to the north, is very envious of this domination. She would like to have more county money spent in her midst; she is irritated because Mineville has the county courthouse, jail, high school, and poor farm. One manifestation of feeling is that many of the leading citizens of the lower valley refuse to do their banking in the only bank in the county, merely because that institution is located in Mineville. But a still better measure of the antagonism is had in the fact that the county's only newspaper, the *Mineville Mail*, has about half the circulation in Junction that it has in Hay, a sister-hamlet with approximately the same population. The upshot of the matter is that Junction has long wished



to secede, and at the present time is strongly behind a movement to divide the county into three parts which would be annexed by adjoining counties. Mineville, of course, is opposed and has a technical advantage since such a step is not possible without an amendment to the state constitution.

As a political unity the county stands paramount over those within its area, for it is the county government which touches the people most and of which they are most keenly aware. Most of the taxes are paid to the county; most of the officers with whom the people have direct contact are county officers; and in all excepting prohibition violations the most potent police officers are the sheriff, the undersheriff, and the deputy sheriffs. So it is not surprising that during an election, obscure county candidates excite as much feeling as do candidates for governor and for president.

At no time is the county unity so explicit as in the course of the campaigning of candidates for county offices. Then economic, political, religious, friendship, and kinship ties which are likely to pass unnoticed suddenly become distinct and their potency recognized. So important are the friendship and kinship ties that in estimating possible votes prior to election, candidates make a practice of adding friendship and kinship groups.

Mineville's main satellites are Hay and Junction. Hay with a population of 439 and Junction with a population of 425 are twenty-two and twenty-eight miles, respectively, to the north. Both of these communities are independent farm-trading centers with Junction also functioning as the point at which the Mineville branch line connects with the transcontinental railway.

Between Mineville and Junction are three hamlets besides Hay—Copperton, Rock, and Mormonville. Rock and

Mormonville are farming centers which are considered as a part of the "lower valley," that is, they are more closely related to Hay and Junction than to Mineville. Copperton, on the other hand, is a mining center which is an immediate satellite of Mineville as is Stump, another mining hamlet which is one mile to the east of town.

It is clear, then, that Mineville's trade area does not include the whole county. Roughly, this area reaches thirty miles to the south, twenty miles to the west, ten miles to the north, and one mile to the east of town. These figures represent a more or less solid territory and do not take into account the occasional mine which may be in operation far beyond.

In general, the trade area is the area of intimate personal contacts, for it is the people who trade in Mineville who are most likely to be seen and known. Indeed, a large percentage of the people of Mineville are but vaguely acquainted with residents of the "lower valley." Individual differences in this respect are great, however. Certain persons tend to be county personalities while others are almost unknown outside of their own towns, and even in them.

#### LARGER CENTERS TOWARD WHICH MINEVILLE LOOKS

St. Louis is Mineville's mother-city. It was from there that most of the leaders in the mining industry of the community hailed, and it was there that most of the many millions of dollars in profits from the local mines were sent. Minevillers often complain that their town shows no evidence of the great wealth which has been produced from these mines. "It all went to build up St. Louis," they say.

In most ways, however, Mineville is a satellite of Gold which lies fifty-eight miles away by automobile highway and

about one hundred miles by railroad. With a population of but 40,000 (1930)<sup>1</sup> Gold is the metropolis of the state. It is the center toward which people within a radius of a hundred and twenty five miles by automobile gravitate in order to see prize fights, football games, theatricals, and prominent personages as well as to "celebrate" under cover of anonymity in a manner which they would not or could not at home. Also, Gold is the central warehouse of a vast region. If a piece of machinery breaks in a nearby town, such as Mineville, the first thought usually is "I must 'phone to Gold and have a new part sent at once," or "Now I'll have to make a trip to Gold in the car for a new part." And, again, if milady wishes to purchase the latest in style, she is conducting herself in the manner of the *élite* if she makes her purchases in Gold rather than at home. This prestige of Gold assumes many angles. Especially interesting is its manifestation in the case of the "expert," for the residents of small towns in the locality are prone to seek medical and dental attention in Gold which is available in equal quality from local practitioners at a lower price.

But the impression should not be given that the people of Mineville have extravagant admiration for Gold. On the contrary, Gold is more criticized than praised by them, as witness the following typical comments of two prominent Mineville residents:

Gold is interesting and exciting. . . . I never saw a place where there were so many old young men. The last time I was in Gold I saw a man who looked too old to be working in the mines, and the hotel clerk told me that the fellow was under thirty.

The average Gold wage-earner is a young man under thirty-five with no plans for a future better than his present. He works in those

<sup>1</sup> More properly, for our purposes the population of Gold may be considered as that of Gold Point County (60,000).

killing mines for eight hours a day and dies a premature death from trying to devote the remaining hours to pleasure. Anyone who has lived around here for forty-five years as I have and has kept in touch with Gold knows this is true. Why I have seen just lots of healthy, strapping young men from this camp go over there when the mines would close over here and practically all of them died premature deaths. I followed their lives by meeting them at Walker's saloon whenever I visited in Gold.

Gold is all right for a day or two but I dread the idea of living there.<sup>1</sup>

Of course, there are former Gold residents who now live in Mineville and who speak very well of their native city while disparaging the small-town stuff of Mineville. To such persons Gold is home and so their enthusiasm over its fine qualities is likely to be biased. But in their sneer at small-town stuff we have the basic cause for much of the prestige of Gold and of larger towns in general: a deep-rooted aversion upon the part of many Minevillers to being stigmatized as small-town folk when they conceive of themselves as large-town folk who are really much out of place in so small a community.

Gold is sought not because Minevillers imagine that they are in a great and admirable metropolis but because it offers the nearest approach to large-city advantages within practicable motoring distance. Even Smelters, twenty-six miles nearer and of twelve thousand population, is habitually passed through when Minevillers are en route to Gold by automobile. Minus a city such as Gold, Smelters and Mineville might have intimate relations in place of the negligible contact which now exists.

<sup>1</sup> Gold recently resented a feature article in a leading magazine which gave its morals unfavorable national publicity. Its residents do not deny the charge of rather glaring immorality in their midst but insist that they "would like to be given credit for having a few good people in town."

Before the days of the automobile the trip to Gold was made by train at the expense of two days to the round trip. Nowadays, upon a moment's consideration, an ejaculation of "Let's go to Gold" is likely to issue forth, and two hours later a party is in Gold not to return until far into the night. Even those who do not own automobiles have access to a bus which makes morning and afternoon trips to and from Gold every day. Thus, as in thousands of other small towns in the United States, Mineville's isolation is becoming a thing of the past.

#### MINEVILLE'S ECONOMIC FOUNDATION

Mineville is almost entirely a producer of raw materials. For this reason, roughly eight railroad cars of products leave the community to every car that enters. The main exported materials are ore, live stock, and farm produce.

Mining is the principal industry of the community, there being large resources of silver, lead, zinc, and manganese-bearing ores under exploitation at the present time. Gold and copper are also produced commercially, and every year sapphires are shipped by the ton from the Sand Creek sapphire mines, which are reputed to be the largest in the world.

The mines of the district have been very productive, the most prolific being situated in an area of mountains about three miles square which borders on the eastern edge of town. Within this strip the mines of Crystal are said to have produced about \$60,000,000 worth of silver and those of the Luck about \$10,000,000—most of which was produced prior to the panic of 1893. Known in its heyday as one of the largest producers of silver in the world, the district gradually lost its pre-eminence as a silver camp, owing to the exhaustion of the richer deposits and to inability to operate at a



profit under the low prices of silver which followed the panic. Hope for a revival of its former grandeur is never abandoned by old-timers, and their dreams seemed destined to be materialized in fact, when suddenly gloom was cast by the depression of 1931. For low-grade ores may now be treated profitably, owing to refinements in methods of extracting minerals, as are exemplified particularly in the development of the oil-flotation process. Still, the wreckage of a succession of fond hopes for silver booms during the last thirty-eight years reveals a pathetic analogy between the messianic prophecy and the community feeling that it has seen days of glory and will again see glorious things come to pass.

Since 1917 the district has been known chiefly as a producer of manganese ore, which is used mainly in the hardening of steel and in dry batteries. Statistics of mineral production show that Mineville produces 96 per cent of the domestic output of manganese dioxide ore and is the largest known source of such ore in the United States. After a thorough investigation, J. T. Pardee of the United States Geological Survey recently estimated that at the present rate of production these deposits will not be exhausted for thirty years. With such an abundance of ore, the community is not much concerned about discovering more for the present and occupies itself rather with the problem of demand. Because foreign competition is a main factor affecting this demand, Mineville watched closely the fate of the manganese tariff which received nation-wide publicity during the autumn of 1929. A fund had been solicited among producers and townsmen in order to assist in financing a manganese-tariff-retention campaign in Washington, D.C.—a campaign which was successful. The newspapers of the nation carried discussions of the manganese problem, owing largely to an impetus fur-

nished by this obscure little town whose name they rarely mentioned.

While mining is dominating the stage in Mineville, the less sensational activities of farmers and stock-raisers always play an important part in the background. The farming and stock-raising population that looks to Mineville as a trade center is approximately half as large as that of the town itself. Hay, wheat, oats, barley, sugar beets, potatoes, cream, cattle, sheep, and horses are exported; whereas the output of many other products such as milk, butter, eggs, chickens, ducks, turkeys, and pork is consumed locally. Even the timber products, which in 1927 were valued at \$125,000, are almost all consumed at home.

Still, with all its varied resources, Mineville promises to be in the future very much as it has been in the past. Unpredictable discoveries of mineral wealth or abnormal demands for certain metals may cause temporary boom periods, but, in the long run, the consensus of intelligent opinion does not seriously expect great and permanent changes for better or for worse—although even the most intelligent like to hope.

## CHAPTER II

### MEMORIES OF THE PAST

Communities, like persons, cannot be understood unless their intimate pasts are known. Hence a situation in Mineville which a stranger might overlook or dispose of with a gesture may be deeply imbedded in the life of the community. Rev. Blackwell's strong criticism of City Treasurer O'Connell's method of collecting water rent is a case in point. After eighteen months of residence this divine said:

They tell me that O'Connell never sends a statement and then he insults you or turns your water off if you don't pay. A fellow with no more business sense than that deserves to lose in the election. I have never heard of such a way of doing business.

Well, if he makes personal calls in order to collect from those who don't pay at the office, he is even more inefficient than I thought. With a statement each month no one would have a good excuse for forgetting, no one would be insulted, and he would save himself lots of work. It's just a backwoods, western, small-town way of doing business, that's all. All of the business houses on Main Street send monthly statements. . . . There is no excuse for O'Connell.

To a casual observer Blackwell's tirade will seem to be justified. But, he did not know the history of O'Connell's office. He did not know that until O'Connell assumed the city treasurership, a few years previously, the city treasurer called at each house each month in order to collect the water rent. He did not know that this was a monthly occurrence which the community had grown to expect, and that O'Connell, who had for many years been a business man, had mildly suffered the fate of a reformer for requesting that people pay their water rent at the city hall. Having considered this



step to have been sufficiently revolutionary for the time being, he had not resorted to the innovation of sending statements, which he knew would have insulted many people who had become accustomed to being placed upon their honor in respect to this particular debt. His collections were excellent, and by tactful reminding of people few persons were antagonized.

This incident casts no ill reflection upon Rev. Blackwell, who has an advanced degree from a large eastern university. Even an individual trained to be objective to social events tends upon first impulse to think in terms of average behavior. The incident, however, shows the sort of error that the most cautious strange investigator is likely to fall into in studying the small town. Unwittingly, the researcher who is a native has acquired orientation in the life-histories of countless thousands of social events in the town, which greatly reduces his liability to errors in interpretation.

#### MINEVILLE—A PIONEER MINING COMMUNITY

The trait which most distinguishes Mineville from small towns in general is that it is a pioneer western mining community. Farming and stock-raising have played a colorful part in its history but the "eat, drink, and be merry" temper of the mining population has given it "life"—especially during the boom periods which are so characteristic of communities whose prosperity is dependent upon the discovery of elusive bodies of ore or upon fluctuating values of metals.

Designation of the community as a pioneer mining community implies that it was founded at a time when the larger region in which it is located was virginal and unexplored or, at least, as yet scarcely modified by the hand of man. It also implies that prominent among the character-

istics of the community are the surviving elements of pioneer days.

Socially, of course, it is not enough to say that there exist relics of the past such as old mines, mills, and cabins in order that the appellation "pioneer mining community" be appropriate. There must exist, as there does in Mineville, a body of pioneer tradition and sentiment which permeates the general community consciousness and which plays a prominent place in the attitudes of the residents.

It is the old residents and their families who serve most effectively to keep alive this body of tradition and sentiment, in the absence of written records. With the death of such men as Kaler, Dufbee, Ringholm, and Botterfield who came to the community sixty-one, sixty, fifty-six, and fifty-six years ago, respectively, the first ten years of the camp will gradually become in the main a matter of myth and legend, and the succeeding decade will be the earliest period upon which first-hand information may be had. But it is not necessary that persons have such long residence in order to be thought "old-timers" since most of the people make little distinction between those of forty years' and those of sixty years' residence. In practice, anyone who witnessed the Golden Age which immediately preceded the panic of 1893 is regarded as an old-timer and conceives of himself as such. By this token there are many old-timers remaining, and a large part of them bid fair to make Mineville their home for a quarter of a century or more since they are yet young. Among their number is Clara McDenry, who is becoming recognized as the local historian.

No persons have a fonder attachment for the far past of Mineville than the native-born pioneers. This, of course, is to be expected since the memories most dear to the human heart are usually those of childhood and youth. But, except-

ing the fear which the early children had for Indians, there is, perhaps, nothing particularly unique about their recollections. The few who were children in 1878, at the time of the Nez Perce massacre twenty-three miles south of town, have extremely vivid recollections of that last instance of Indian violence in these parts.

The Nez Perce affair has no equal among Mineville's anecdotes of the days of the Indian. The oldest resident speaks of it as follows:

I was in town when Nez Perce Smith arrived from that massacre. For four or five days there was a lot of guarding done from the top of the ridges. Captain John McLane was in charge and I believe you can still see the depressions which were our trenches.

I was a guard and I can tell you that the people were alarmed to no small extent. They had it planned to go into the Luck Mine in case the Indians came. The people from all the adjoining places, such as Stump and Bismarck, came to Mineville and we surely had a full house at the hotel for a while.

"Nez Perce" Smith, who died recently, is the community's only hero. The story of his having crawled for miles in blood-drenched clothing, while evading the pursuing Indians, is currently taken as a demonstration of uncanny ability, extreme bravery, and high-minded devotion in the service of the people of Mineville. But a local iconoclast has offered what appears to be a more plausible interpretation. He said:

Nez Perce wasn't thinking of the people of Mineville when he made his great dash for town. He was thinking of himself, and the best thing for him to do was to run for town. I'll bet he was a much surprised man when people made a hero of him because he warned them that the Indians had massacred those men on Sand Creek.

The very old-timers relate many Indian stories, but it should not be assumed that the Indian was ever a continual object of great concern. Only occasionally when the redmen

were on the warpath did they occupy the central focus of attention which most of the time was directed toward mining and farming. It is the fascination of the Indian stories for later generations which does so much to keep them alive.

The great abundance of mining and farming stories is adequate testimony that the lives of the people were woven about these activities. Stories of crop failures, cattle-stealing, and of the great difficulties in achieving a start in life are characteristic of the old farmers, but even they seem to see more romance in the mining stories than in their own. Stories of poor friends made rich over night by "striking it rich" in a mine, or of wealthy men made poor by extravagant faith in mines which did not justify their hopes, are typical and are known to all.

This mining complex permeates the community so thoroughly that a stranger who knows nothing of mining is likely to be assumed to be conversant with mining terminology and interested in what kind of ore was struck in such-and-such a mine forty years ago. Indeed, he may have some difficulty in gracefully extracting himself from long recitals of crooked mining deals, cruel bosses, poor ventilation, rich strikes, and accidents which are far outside the sphere of his interests.

The most picturesque instances of the mining complex are found in old prospectors whose pursuit of mineral wealth is undaunted although they may have spent from forty to sixty years in fruitless search. With a sample of ore the prospector goes to the assay office hoping that he will receive an encouraging report. After waiting a day for the analysis to be made he receives news which may throw him into the heights of ecstasy or the depths of despair. But whatever his luck he continues with his tireless efforts, and

even though he make a fortune he "puts it back into the ground," if he is true to his type.

Cases like the following are common:

There have been times when I had a little money. During the war I had \$40,000 I made from manganese.

Yes, I put it back into the ground. *But* that wasn't the only stake I ever had. I had another of \$25,000 about three years later and that went back into the ground, too.

Hunting and fishing are all right for young fellows who haven't anything else to do but I'd rather hunt around the hills for a piece of float.<sup>1</sup>

Although there are still many instances of the prospecting habit, as a type the prospector is disappearing. Most of the young men of today prefer the assured returns of "day's pay" to a vague chance of enormous wealth, for they have known far too many forlorn and poverty-stricken old prospectors to make that sort of life attractive to them. But this is not to say that the lure of sudden riches and prosperity from mining ventures is gone, for there is always a lingering hope that the "good old days" will be repeated. Rumors are constantly afloat of rich strikes, proposed mills, and the prospective expenditures of large amounts of money in developing mines. In fact, Minevillers are often duped into investing in dubious mining schemes despite the numerous instances in which they have seen "eastern capital" spent in mining ventures in which they would never have risked their own money. The skeptics are called "knockers." While hope was still high regarding a recent mining bubble, one of these "knockers" said:

It's another skin game like the Good Boy [an ill-fated mine of fifteen years ago]. We've got to have one like that every so often.

<sup>1</sup> *Float*: A stray piece of ore on the surface of the ground which may indicate the presence of a larger body of ore in the near proximity.



About every ten or fifteen years the people have to learn their lesson over again by losing their savings in a hole-in-the-ground.

And in time this man was saying with an air of self-satisfaction, "I told you so." But the unfortunate investors answered:

It was a good gamble. If it had turned out right we could be saying, "I told you so." We have no complaint excepting that the company doesn't seem to have been organized on the square at first. It's a pretty hard blow for us poor devils to lose about all we have, but there's no use to cry about it.

The ever renewing faith of Minevillers in mines is a classic illustration for the saying that "hope springs eternal in the human breast." No loss seems large enough to cause utter despair. Suicide because of a mining failure is unknown in the history of the town. What externally appears to be a hopeless town is strikingly disposed to be hopeful, and optimistic, in this one respect at least. The person who is skeptical and pessimistic about one mine is likely to see great possibilities in another.

#### UPS AND DOWNS IN MINEVILLE'S PROSPERITY

From the discovery of ore on Luck Hill by Hector Morton in 1865 Mineville's population story has been one of ups and downs. Changes in the market prices of metals and the discovery and exhaustion of ore bodies have intermittently boomed and depressed the community. But no accurate figures are available as to the extent of these changes because the United States census years did not coincide with those of booms and depressions. This was especially true of Crystal, a neighboring mining town (now abandoned) whose history is closely interwoven with that of Mineville. The census figures are shown in Table I.

The boom years not accounted for in these figures are 1867-68, 1891-92, and 1917-18; and the worst depression years are 1871-73 and 1893-96. Only estimates are available as to the size of the community at such times. During early pioneer days (1867-68), when prosperity first smiled on the locality, an election vote of some six hundred was cast in Mineville. This vote probably measures the population of the town and the surrounding mining area at that time since most of the men were single or had left their wives at home. Twenty-five years later (1893) found Mineville with about eighteen hundred people, and her flourishing new sister-

TABLE I

	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930
Mineville . . . . .	59	299	1,058	995	1,109	1,724	1,410
Crystal . . . . .	None	None	1,310	1,079	53	113	None

town, Crystal, with about thirty-two hundred. In any case, the census figures of these earlier days are likely to be misleading because of the large number of men who made Mineville or Crystal their headquarters as they "went out in the hills" to prospect or to cut wood. Wood-choppers, in fact, were very numerous, since the mines and mills used wood for fuel even a number of years after the coming of the railroad brought coal. One can stand at the top of a high mountain east of Crystal and see one mountain side after another which was deforested by the axes of those wood-choppers. On their rare trips to town these tremendous whiskey-drinkers would spend the savings from several months' wages in a few days. Truly the effect of the early boom periods are not properly taken into account if those hardy Swedes and Frenchmen are left out of the picture. The

effect of the latest burst of flourishing prosperity (1917-19), however, was confined mainly to the area of the town itself, and so it is not so difficult to estimate in terms of population. According to the post-office method of computing population by stamp sales and mail, Mineville then had reached a figure of thirty-three hundred. Besides these larger fluctuations, however, it must be remembered that within any ordinary year there is a high seasonal fluctuation, which during the last decade has caused the male population to be about 20 per cent larger in summer than in winter and which sometimes reaches a much higher figure.

With so changing a picture we can only attempt to chart the ups and downs of the community as shown in Table II.

TABLE II

	1865-66	Initial prospecting
Good .....	1867-68	Luck Mill and mine operating
Very dull .....	1869-74	Luck Mill had been a failure
Good .....	1875-77	Fish and Luck mines operating
Fair .....	1878-79	Price of silver low
Good .....	1880-82	Iroquois Mill operating
Excellent .....	1883-93	The "Golden Age" of the community —rated as one of greatest silver- producing districts in world; a "free-silver" boom
Exceedingly dull .....	1894-98	The aftermath of the panic of 1893
Good .....	1899-05	A valiant attempt was made again to operate the Crystal mines on a large scale; Crystal achieved about a third of its former size only to suffer another "crash," from which it never recovered
Alternatingly very dull and fair .....	1905-16	Main company gave small leases to miners; experimenting with meth- ods of extracting minerals



- Very good.....1917-19 Inability to obtain foreign manganese ore led to the development of an American domestic manganese industry with the Mineville area as the main producer; local silver mining in obscurity
- Good.....1920-24 Mineville manganese no longer marketed for hardening steel but it acquired a national reputation for use in dry batteries which were in great demand owing to the introduction of the radio
- Down.....1925 Principal mill for concentrating manganese ore burned, causing National Carbon Co. (main consumer) to operate its own mines in Africa
- Good.....1926-28 A new mill built and in operation without the National Carbon Co.'s contract; interest in silver, lead, and zinc ore coming to the fore
- Good.....1929-30 Manganese operations caused much silver, lead, and zinc ore to be discovered; mills for this type of ore in prospect of being built
- Dull.....1931 The general depression strikes Mineville

This account describes the cyclical activity of the community's industrial history in terms of booms and aftermaths of booms in the mining industry, as is the community habit. Much fluctuation has also occurred in the farmer's and stockman's prosperity, however. In the decade from 1910 to 1920 there was a great deal of homesteading done on dry land and many failures resulted. The windowless homes and falling fences to be seen here and there in Mine-

ville's farming area are tragic testimony of the struggles and eventual failure of those hopeful settlers. Less obvious but still more far reaching was the general distress suffered by the farmers of the district owing to the deflation of farm values in 1921. In the end the community as a whole felt the poor prosperity of the farmers at that time because by 1930 two banks in Mineville and one in Junction had failed, owing to conditions arising mainly from farm loans. But as a rule the burden of farm failures has tended to be scattered in time and to be borne by individual farmers and their creditors rather than by the entire community. For when a farmer (not the homesteaders mentioned) has become insolvent, another has usually taken his place and farming has gone on just the same. Because of the stability of this industry there is no reason to suppose that Mineville will ever suffer the same fate as Crystal. Here we have one answer to the naïve Mineviller's query as to "how in the world there ever happened to be a town of Mineville when all<sup>1</sup> of the mines were closed down?" Indeed, the wealthiest men in the community are farmers or stockmen.

#### SMELTERS, GOLD, AND MINEVILLE—THE RACE BETWEEN COMMUNITIES

The population story of the Mineville district stands in distinct contrast with that of its larger sisters, Gold and Smelters. The little town is as old as Gold and twenty years older than Smelters, and yet it has long been to them but a small, struggling, neighboring village which has grown in years but not in size. Gold, with its forty thousand people, calls itself "the largest mining city in the world"; and

<sup>1</sup> There were always a few individual miners who worked independently or on small leases during the dullest of years.

Smelters, with its twelve thousand, boasts "the world's largest smelter" for the extraction of metals other than iron.

Mineville once gave such promise that prospectors and business men cast their lots in its midst rather than in Gold. In 1927, a normal year, the mines of Gold produced metals valued at \$50,000,000 as compared with the \$500,000 of the Mineville district. Mineville's humble fate as compared with those of Gold and Smelters is shown in United States census figures (see Table III).

TABLE III

	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930
Gold.....	241	3,363	10,723	30,470	39,165	41,611	39,516
Smelters.....	None	None	3,975	9,453	10,134	11,668	12,529
Mineville.....	59	299	1,058	995	1,109	1,724	1,410

## CRYSTAL—A "GHOST CITY"

The most striking phase of the community's history is centered about Crystal, a deserted mining town which lies four miles from Main Street by a winding mountain road and is eighteen hundred feet higher in elevation. Forty years ago Crystal was a bustling mining city which dominated the Mineville district; now it has but one part-time resident—a watchman. With vast mine dumps, ruins of mills, and a multitude of naked foundations of buildings to bespeak of thriving human activity of which old-timers never tire of relating in glowing terms, Crystal is now what westerners call a "ghost city."

Mushroom communities such as Crystal were not uncommon in connection with the precipitate exploitation of natural resources during the virgin days of the West. Indeed, many of them were much more transient than Crystal.

Feverish haste to acquire wealth, extremely high market prices of temporary character, and the exhaustion of nature's resources contributed to cause the growth and decline of such communities. Crystal's fate was due to the depletion of most of the known richer veins of ore and to the low market prices of silver which followed the panic of 1893.

Crystal was a mere "prospect hole" in the outskirts of Mineville until ore was struck in 1882. Local people placed little faith in the potentialities of Crystal Mountain and, as the story goes, the St. Louis capitalists who were financing the exploratory work had telegraphed that operations be discontinued. This telegram was met at Junction by one from Crystal stating that ore had been struck in the last blast. Had the St. Louis telegram arrived a few hours earlier, developmental work would have been stopped, the mine would have filled with water, and the sixty millions of dollars' worth of silver which came from the Crystal mines might (though unlikely) yet rest in its original subterranean chambers.

Only a few years after Crystal had ceased to be the romantic dream of a prospector, it had overshadowed its mother-community in size and prestige. Former residents of the ghost city boast that they seldom condescended to stop at Mineville when on their way home from neighboring towns. Mineville, they say, was merely the closest railway contact, a contemptible "little place," the relative importance of which is shown by the fact that the more important theatricals "passed right through" when en route to Crystal. The towns bore a great deal of animosity for each other. If "the boys" from one went to the other to gamble they were likely to find themselves victims of unfair play and to end by engaging in a fist fight.

The "crash," as the panic of 1893 is called, was the death-blow to Crystal and the greatest catastrophe which has befallen the entire community. After having lost almost the whole of its population in a month, in this instance, Crystal had achieved a third of its former activity by the end of a decade only to have the larger operations discontinued for the last time in 1905. Following the exodus of 1905 the town gradually fell away until by 1922 it was totally deserted.

All old residents of Crystal and Mineville as well like to describe the catastrophic effects of the "crash of 1893." As one Crystal resident put it:

You just can't imagine what that "crash" was like unless you saw it. There were all of those people living from hand to mouth and saving very little and taking it for granted that good times would last forever. The announcement that things were closed down was absolutely unexpected and hit them like a thunderbolt. Nobody's credit was any good and nearly everybody was "broke" or nearly "broke." Most of the people were gone in a week and nearly all were gone in a month. Most of them made no attempt to take any more of their belongings than could be stuffed into trunks or suitcases or carried on the back. Houses almost completely furnished were left. It was terrible to have things so suddenly quiet. All of that noise and excitement was gone! The houses were empty and the people who remained were downcast.

Descriptions of the "crash" from Mineville's point of view are no less startling. The announcement of the "shut-down" came at ten o'clock in the morning, and the Mineviller saw throngs of men, women, and children trudging their way down the four miles of dusty road from Crystal in order to depart on the train which left at one o'clock. So rapidly did people leave that a special train service was scheduled in addition to the regular daily run. And Mineville, although not suffering so extremely as Crystal, was

unspeakably depressed. In fact, so cataclysmic was the "crash" upon the whole community that old-timers often liken it to the end of the world.

During the heyday of Crystal her people and those of Mineville were not so well acquainted as might be supposed. Mutual dependence upon the prosperity of one mining company and isolation together in a region were the main causes of a feeling of unity. Hotly contested baseball games and the communities' having celebrated together on the main day of festivities for each—Miner's Union Day—were not indications of far-reaching personal relations. This is shown in the measure of social distance evidenced by the fact that a young man whose reputation was such in one town that its "respectable" girls refused to associate with him could go to the other and fraternize with its "best" young women. But, in proportion to the decline of Crystal's population, this social distance decreased and Crystal again became a satellite of Mineville with the old connection of personal acquaintanceship restored.

The relationship between Mineville and Crystal at present is psychological, that is, many residents of Mineville are thought of as former residents of Crystal and think of themselves in terms of that community to a large extent. Thus the old community consciousness persists and is reacted to by Minevillers even though the actual locality has long been deserted.



### CHAPTER III

## WHAT MINEVILLE THINKS OF ITSELF

#### DIVERGENT CULTURAL HERITAGES

There are small towns in which the variety of types of people is not very great, but this is not true of Mineville. Not only the original settlers but the newcomers throughout the years have represented a great diversity of ethnic stocks. Indeed, a well-assorted representation of ten nationalities is to be found, and community practice has many other categories, the most conspicuous of all being: native born of North European stock, the "foreigner," the local son, the pioneer, the miner, the country-bred, the woodsman, the white-collared, the easterner, the southerner, and the college-bred. But with all the wide range of life-backgrounds, there has grown up in the sixty-six years of the community's history a distinctive local heritage. Even most of the transplanted residents have had their lives interwoven with the life of the community so long that they have a Mineville pattern of mind. While the heritage they have brought to the town is in evidence, it has taken on a peculiar cast in its constant interaction with the local context. In other words, they have become Minevillers.

In spite of ups and downs in prosperity, a community, when once started, tends to have a stable existence. There is always the conservative influence of those people who establish homes and, as in the old-fashioned wedding, accept the community for better or for worse. A measure of the tendency of Minevillers to take root is shown in the grouping of



heads of households in terms of years of residence as follows:

TABLE IV

Years of Residence	No. of Heads of Households
0-5.....	46
5-10.....	24
10-20.....	58
20-30.....	25
30-40.....	74
40-50.....	41
50-60.....	13

These figures are likely to give an erroneous impression that the population is not rapidly changing. In explanation it should be said that they were taken during a dull period when the shifting part of the population was largely out of town. Also, it should be noted that no indication of the children is given—most of whom leave the community to pursue their fortunes elsewhere before establishing households. Therefore the figures represent a central core in the population which tends to persist throughout booms and depressions.

Among these same households it was found that 186 adult persons had spent either their entire lives in the community or all of their lives excepting early childhood. This figure includes fathers, mothers, grown children living at home, and unmarried persons not living at home. Representing about a fourth of the adult population, it bespeaks clearly of the strength of the Mineville heritage in the community when added to the fact of the long residence of transplanted residents, and to the further fact that the great majority of minors are Mineville born. The great influence of the resulting long association with one another and with local institutions will be in evidence throughout this volume.

Fifteen per cent of the people in Mineville are foreign born. Cities with foreign populations proportionately large have huge Ghettos, "Little Italys," and other segregated cultural areas in which immigrants can live very much unaffected by American conditions. But in Mineville there are too few persons of any nationality for anyone excepting a hermit to live his life within his own group. Only an Italian can find establishments on Main Street so that he can trade with his own people, and he has but a "moonshine joint" and a barber shop. Almost in spite of himself, the immigrant who settles in Mineville finds himself making many contacts outside his people, and, what is most important, these contacts tend to have that intimacy characteristic of the small town. Under such intimate identification he soon finds himself striving to be like the thoroughly Americanized stock which holds sway in the community and taking on the ideals of his adopted country. He owns an automobile, furnishes his home in American taste, dresses like an American, reads American newspapers, and makes a desperate attempt to speak the English language without accent. It is not strange, then, that English is spoken by practically all of Mineville's foreign-born and read by 80 per cent of them.

Knowledge of a foreign tongue in the offspring of immigrants is often entirely absent and usually very imperfect. Such knowledge is displayed only in conversing with their parents or with other foreigners who have a poor grasp of English, and then very reluctantly if "outsiders" are present. The strong hold of the English language on their lives is shown in the fact that when alone and in their most heated arguments it is employed. This rule applies alike to Germans, Italians, Swedes, Finns, and Serbians, who constitute the principal portion of the foreign element.

Nationality groupings which are of outstanding signifi-

cance in the life of the town are difficult to measure mathematically. Only the 57 Italians, the 47 Serbians, and the 26 Finnish constitute well-knit bodies. The community is disposed to consider the 100-odd Swedes and Swede-Finns as if they have group unity when, in truth, the people of both groups tend to be divided into more or less sharply defined cliques. So many Swede-Finns pretend to be Swedes that members of these groups themselves are often confused as to which is genuine and which is not. There is a group of "Germans" which derives much satisfaction from the Sons of Herman, a fraternal organization, but, on the whole, so-called Germans make little ado of their European derivation, nor does the community. Unless persons are thought of as "foreigners," they are not discriminated against on the basis of nationality. In general, Swedes, Finns, all those of Southern European blood, and those who cannot speak English fluently or without very strong accent are considered to be "foreigners"—but there are many exceptions.

#### ATTITUDES TOWARD THE COMMUNITY

The jests of city people at the expense of small towns are proverbial, but what is not so well known is that alert small-townners themselves are even more relentless in praising, condemning, and jesting about the small town. To them it is a live issue and a perennial topic of conversation. Its limitations, advantages, humor, and pathos are constantly and intimately affecting their lives. They are specialists and experts upon their particular town, and there is no apparent reason for supposing that they are less rational in judging it than city residents are in judging cities. In the case of Mineville, at least, it does not seem necessary to go elsewhere in order to find able critics of her life. With all the error that is

likely to be involved in statements of attitudes toward the community, the people seem to fall into four classes: the "very enthusiastic," the "satisfied," the "resigned," and the "dissatisfied."

*The very enthusiastic.*—The "booster" is very enthusiastic but his actual attitudes are difficult to ascertain, for he feels obliged by principle to say none but good things about the community. Often he is genuinely enthusiastic about his environment, to be sure, but one is never quite certain to what extent he is motivated by business, social, or ethical policy.

A man who may be characterized as a physiological optimist and whose optimism and good spirits are bolstered by his religious creed that the imperfections of this world are necessary stages in a process of realizing God's will on earth expressed unqualified adoration for Mineville. While he no doubt likes the town, it must be remembered that the appellation "knocker" is very distasteful to him. With his characteristic enthusiasm he said: "Do I like this town? I love it! It is simply wonderful to live among the type of people one finds in this town—they are so whole-hearted and generous."

Then, there are those who have an aversion to life in large cities and who, while they are more or less indifferent to the town proper, appreciate keenly the ready access to secluded and private spots of beauty which Mineville affords. They, like the people in general, appreciate the contrast between the clean air of Mineville and the dust- and smoke-laden atmosphere of a large city. One of these hunting, fishing, and camping fans enthused:

Do you ever go camping?

I know one of the most beautiful streams in America and if you like camping we can take our wives and go.

This stream is inaccessible and you've got to be a real hiker to follow it but it's worth it. I went last week end and our meter showed 186 miles for the round trip.

I'd rather have someone give me \$50 for a two weeks' outing on that stream than to be given \$1,000 for a trip to Chicago or Los Angeles or any other big city. That's real life to me and I'll tell you I feel better for several days after an outing of that kind; my work is more pleasant and I can go right after it. I've been to Chicago, and New York, and San Francisco, and Seattle, and Los Angeles and all over. Big cities mean nothing to me.

By principle, business men are "boosters" and are reluctant to disparage their community openly. The Mineville Rotary Club harbors a goodly number of this sort, but even in a club of boosters there are usually some who stand head and shoulders above the remainder of the group in boosting propensities. Dewey Davis is such an individual. He is known as a civic slave, and it is inconsistent with his ideals to be otherwise than a booster. When approached rather bluntly he replied: "You want my attitude toward the town? Well, all I care to say is that I was a booster before I ever joined the Rotary."

The Rotarian who condemns "knocking" and lauds boosting the home town with righteous fury is a commonplace. The extent of his sincerity, however, has an acid test in a small town, for it is bound to be discovered by someone. For instance, a certain local business man was recently discovered to have purchased a bill of groceries in Smelters to the extent of \$174.50. The following are among statements he has made to the writer:

I think a fellow should buy at home even if it does cost a little more. I always do.

I like this town and the whole community. This is largely because I am so well acquainted here, I suppose. I like the people here.

Among those most enthusiastic about Mineville are foreigners, and their commendations usually may be taken as genuine. We may quote a Serbian (age fifty-five) who did not make a long-time adjustment to a community before arriving in Mineville.

I was seventeen when I left Serbia.

It was hard for a couple of years until I learned the language, but I had two cousins in California who were old-timers there.

I wouldn't care to live in Serbia again. I was going to go back eighteen years ago for a trip but I backed out.

Now I doubt if I will ever go back. I wouldn't give Crystal County for all of Serbia.

I was a wanderer until I landed here. After I was here I never cared to leave.

Recently a young man of twenty returned after several months of what his parents assumed was a permanent leave from the home town. Being generally regarded as of low mental caliber and able to respond with marked satisfaction to nearly everything which engages his attention in Mineville, it was to be expected that he might find difficulty in deriving the same values from another community upon short trial. The following statements made before his departure are evidence that a quarrel with his sister was not the basic cause for his return, as the community supposes:

I'm not achin' to leave this town and it's not because I'm afraid to leave my father's table either. I like the town—that's all. When a fellow goes away he gets lonesome because he don't know a soul. It's sure nice to know who the people are that you see. I'd leave in a hurry if I wanted to because I have the money.

*The satisfied.*—There are those who, after having tried life in large cities, prefer small-town life. Witness the testimony of an octogenarian who had spent forty years in Mineville:



I like small towns. I have worked many years in large towns in my time but I can't say that I liked them. Large-town people don't know what real friendships are. You seldom follow a fellow's career long enough in a big city to form an enduring friendship. In a small town you follow hundreds of people from the cradle to the grave.

I'd like to go home but I'll never go while I am broke and I guess that means I'll never go.

I haven't been home since '93. Oh well! I'll soon be gone and so it won't make any difference.

Then, there is the Mineviller who decided to "go back home" but found that home was not as he had imagined it. "I came in '82. No, I wouldn't trade Mineville and Stump for the whole of Ireland. I was back there thirteen years ago but it didn't mean much to me."

"They nearly always come back" is a statement which is upon the lips of all who have lived in Mineville long enough to observe the effect upon departees who have acquired a satisfying adjustment to its life. A woman who has resided in the community for fifty-three years testified:

I never care very much for any place excepting Mineville. I have been away for several trips but I'm always glad to get back.

No, I never thought of leaving Mineville. At first I was busy raising my children [twelve of them] and now I don't think I could get along without the place. I have always been satisfied to live here.

A man of fifty-six years' residence spoke similarly: "I always liked it here. Once I went to Missouri to stay and another time I went to Gold to stay, but both times I couldn't stay away from Mineville and so I returned."

It is with great difficulty that persons who have not lived long in one small community can realize the basis of the strong attachment which these old-timers have for Mineville. Newcomers are likely to call such old residents "old fossils." Certainly very few, if any, of the newcomers have



an adequate picture of the myriad memories of blasted hopes, tragedies, successes, failures, good times, and sufferings, and of departed friends and loved ones which come to the old resident as he sits upon a hillside and surveys the community which he has seen pass through so many changes. Every hillside, creek, mine, street, alley, or building of consequence is rich in associations for these old persons, as are most of the several thousand graves in the cemetery. Indeed, the two oldest residents remember when there were but three graves in the graveyard. What a picture of death these men have when they visit the burial plot in which have been laid, on an average, twenty-five of their relatives, friends, and acquaintances each year for sixty years!

The indigenous old-timers have, if possible, a stronger adjustment to Mineville than the old persons quoted, because of never having been adjusted elsewhere. After fifty-three years in town one of them declared: "I've lived here all my life and wouldn't care to live anywhere else. All my friends and all the things I hold dear are here in this town."

Becoming attached to Mineville is usually a slow process. If conditions are such that the individual is obliged to remain until he has made an adjustment to local conditions while his former environment has so changed until he loses his old feeling of intimacy toward it, he becomes a Mineviller in spite of himself. A young man who was forced to make a change of residence while in high school observed: "It took about four years before I thought of Mineville as my home. But, in time, things changed in Smelters so that when I visited there, people and things were strange and I lost that feeling of closeness toward them."

The process of becoming "satisfied" commonly starts with

positive aversion. This feeling appears to be relieved much more readily in the case of married men than in that of married women—if the men have steady work. A young married woman who had passed through the process may be quoted: “I hated the town at first. I thought I would die if I had to live here but I like it now. I like so many of the people.”

*The resigned.*—Tied because they own property which may be disposed of with great difficulty in Mineville, because they can best earn a livelihood in the community, or because as indifferently as they feel toward Mineville they have never known a place which suits them better, many people accept Mineville as they do the inevitable forces of nature—as a thing about which it is useless to complain. The characteristic expression of such people is: “I can’t say much for Mineville but it’s no use to complain when it looks as if I’m going to be here the rest of my life.”

An old-timer whose wife insists that he remain even though the altitude is too high for him and who is further bound by property and by his being too old to approximate earning a living elsewhere said:

You say: do I like it here? A fellow has to like the place where he lives. It’s no use not to like it. I would like to take a trip, of course, but I haven’t the money to spare. I’d better not waste money because I’m too old to earn much more.

Old age, extenuating financial circumstances, and reluctance to establish a professional reputation elsewhere served to keep Mineville’s pioneer lawyer in residence for forty-nine years of resignedness. To quote his own words:

Did I ever think of leaving this community? Well I should say I did but I never was able to do so and now I am too old. At first I

didn't have the money and later I had a family in addition to no money. And, besides, I had worked up a law practice which I didn't want to leave.

The most prominent of Mineville Italians bears evidence of being satisfied and resigned with his lot in the community. He also illustrates the type of individual who chanced to come into contact with Mineville just as he was overcoming a desire to see the world. Had this common desire of young men for adventure passed away earlier or persisted longer he might have settled in quite a different locality, Mineville itself probably having little to do with its passing. In an interview this former globe-trotter remarked:

I would like to go back home for a trip but I guess I never will. Things seem to be pulling against me. I never ask for any more than enough to be comfortable on here in Mineville. You see I'm a sort of cripple. . . .

I didn't stay as long as a year in one place till I landed here and I never left here [nineteen years of wandering].

There's no use of moving around so much. There's nothing in it. You never have what you can really call a friend and if you get down and out who will help you?

While old residents are more prone to be resigned to Mineville as a place of abode than the younger folk, such resignedness is also prevalent among the young. These people typically say: "I suppose I would leave it I had any 'get up' about me but I guess I never will."

*The dissatisfied.*—A statistical study would show that most Minevillers are dissatisfied with their town—of this all residents are certain. From early pioneer days such a condition has prevailed. Most people have lived in Mineville not because they have loved it but because of the positive press of circumstances or because of expediency. Always the majority has hoped to go to fairer pastures. The historical

basis of the community habit of dissatisfaction is suggested by a woman who began her residence in 1878 as a girl of ten years.

I can't remember that people ever pulled together in this town. The early settlers came here to get rich and planned to leave, and it seems that that old kicking about the town has never left. When I was in California I was astounded at the difference in the spirit of the small-town people. Why they boosted and boosted while here everybody knocks or at best is indifferent.

I remember that old Commercial Club which broke up because two factions arose in it. You may be able to get that story from one of the members.

People have always knocked this town and yet they stay here.

Well, I must admit I don't like the town myself. I really never did like it but I didn't say anything. Especially now that my boys are gone I seem to have lost interest in the town. While they were here the affairs of the town were linked up with mine more than now.

Well, you see, I wouldn't stay here if it weren't for my mining properties. But, as it is, I am tied down; I just can't get away, much as I would like to.

The altitude here distresses me. You can't imagine how much better I feel in California—especially since the serious operation I had at Rochester.

“Everyone complains about the complainers and then complains himself” is a statement which is very fitting in Mineville, but the people as a whole are not without a sense of humor as to the drama they are enacting. They like to poke fun at their little home town. Perhaps, the appearance of books such as *Main Street* has helped the small-town resident to appreciate the drama of small-town life. In Mineville, at least, it is characteristic for the more intelligent residents to comment in the following vein:

MR. D.: The town sure is dead. My gosh and it's this way every year—not a gol darn thing doin'. Poor old Mineville!

With all its ups and downs it's a good old town—lots of interesting people. What a field for a novelist or any writer interested in character! There is McClone who was seventeen years mayor of Mineville, then there is old Judge Burfee, "Nigger Wesse," "Miss Mary," and a host of others. What characters! [And the writer might add that Mr. D. is usually included when others are naming the most interesting characters of the drama.]

MRS. D.: It is certainly surprising when one discovers the number of intelligent people in this forlorn-looking town. To look at the town you wouldn't think an intelligent person would live here. What a blow it was to me when I first gazed upon this forlorn-looking place!

The drama which Mr. and Mrs. D. see in Mineville does not prevent them from wishing to leave. There is much gossip about Mrs. D.'s unhappiness. Mrs. D., being the most accomplished artist in any line in town, is said to feel herself to be above her environment. In the words of a prominent professional man: "Mrs. D. is an unhappy woman. Mrs. McDale is responsible for that to a large extent because she is continually telling Mrs. D. how superior she is to her environment."

Mr. D., on the other hand, is dissatisfied for quite different reasons. While he is very much wedded to the town, he would like to leave because his business is not prospering and because Mineville offers no good opportunities for his children who are rapidly finishing high school.

Mrs. D.'s belief that Mineville harbors a surprising number of intelligent people is shared by the intelligentsia of the town. One of these leaders testified:

If I felt superior to my environment I think I would get out of it. I always preferred to be a big frog in a small pool to being the same size frog in a large pool.

For many years I have believed that we have a high level of intelligence among our people in Mineville. They seem much more alert and intelligent than the same class of city people.



Recognition that there are "some very intelligent people in town" does not save the town from bitter condemnation when ignorance is displayed by other townsfolk. "Did you ever see such ignorance and narrowness as we have in this town?" is the customary expression at such times, and the humorous thing about this judgment is that it is often passed by very ignorant people with as much justification as morons have been heard to say, "President Wilson was ignorant." This projection of an emotional state into a judgment of the town is, of course, also applicable to the very enthusiastic, the satisfied, and the resigned. The intelligent resident is well aware that an expressed attitude toward the town may be due to a transient emotional state. Note the following very rational consideration of Mineville's limitations by a man who is satisfied with the town but who knows that he often appears to be quite the opposite:

I like this town or I wouldn't have stayed here for ten years, but I figure on leaving for about a year because I think one should change his environment occasionally or he becomes fixed and unadaptable.

I've been here longer than I have at any other place. There is something I like about this town in spite of the criticizing you hear me dealing out at times.

But, as I said, I want to get out before it is too late. I notice that Mineville people seek out Mineville people whenever they travel. They might almost as well stay at home as far as social contacts are concerned because they don't care about meeting strangers. And, as a rule, they come back very little broadened by their experiences.

But perhaps most people do not reflect in this wise upon their attitudes toward the town. If they are dissatisfied the town tends to be blamed. This is illustrated in the complaint of a high-school girl who longs for the day when she will "go off to college" where she will be able to associate with boys and attend parties and dances as she pleases with-

out parental restraint: "I'll go mad if I don't get out of this town this summer. I'm in an awful fix. I hate to go to school, and, when school is out I will hate things because I will have nothing to do—not even school."

Of the youth of the community, few will be found outside of the satisfied and dissatisfied groups, with most of them in the latter. Occasionally, a young man who has spent enough time away from town to become dissatisfied with the outside world will be heard to say: "Mineville is good enough for me. I had to leave to find that out." But, by far most of them say: "There is nothing to do in this damned town. God! It's terrible! Nothing but work [or school], eat, and sleep! Thank goodness I don't have to spend all of my life here." From this it is clear that the lack of opportunities for excitement during leisure time is a principal complaint of the youth.

Not only the lack of stimulating leisure-time activities but a paucity of cherished objectives toward which their workaday labors promise to lead them are matters of lamentation. Youth and their elders alike say: "If you stay in Mineville long enough you are almost bound to fall into a rut. Minevillers who amount to anything have to leave town for their opportunities." A young university student pictures the situation with its effect upon him in this wise:

I often envy people who have a burning ambition. I wonder if I'll ever be so ambitious that things will seem worth striving for. I make fine resolutions but over night they lose their force. I think it is partly a result of the kind of town this is. Allan McKendre calls it the "Mineville Sleeping Sickness." He says that after you live here a while you fall into a rut and don't care whether you progress or not. All you care about is that you can eat, and sleep, and not be uncomfortable. I think it's a fact that one is affected that way in this town.

No, I don't like Mineville. I'm just here because I have to—like



I think everyone else is. I'm waiting for things to transpire so that I can get out.

I don't pretend to blame all my laziness upon the town. I'm naturally lazy, I know that.

Nothing causes more people to be dissatisfied with Mineville than its weather. Even the most satisfied resident damns the changeable, disagreeable, cold weather which is almost certain to last from October 1 to June 1. The following is an outburst of a business man on May 14 when he yet had thirty-three days before three and one-half months of pleasant weather was ushered in with surprising suddenness:

I have no fire. That's why it's cold in here.

This is no country for a man to live in. When you get as old as I am you will know that a lot better than you do now. Here it is the middle of May and we still have winter. Life is too short for one to spend it in a God-forsaken place like this. You can bet your damntootin' I wouldn't be here if I weren't tied down because I was damned fool enough to buy a home, and to get started in this here business.

I should have left here ten years ago. In fact, I should never have come back here when I came back from the war. There is the woman up at the house. She is workin' her head off to put in a garden, and how long will it last? The chances are pretty good that a frost will kill half of the stuff in August. I like flowers but you know how much good it does me in a place like this.

After me! Why, my wife is after me all the time to leave for California. That's all I hear. But, it's not so damned easy to do.

I'm goin' some day, if I'm seventy when I go. To hell with this here town!

Maybe I'll never get out but I'm sure as hell going to try. It might not be this year but it will be in two or three or four years if I have anything to say about it. Everybody wants to get out of this town and you can't blame 'em. But, most of 'em never seem to get out. Take Dr. Paige, for instance. He had about a quarter of a million and still he stayed here till he died here.

There was no good excuse for him. He was too stingy, that's all.

This man was dissatisfied with the weather, to be sure, but that does not explain his attitude entirely. He is, in fact, reputed to find "everything" unsatisfactory, and so when given good cause his denunciatory vigor was naturally very strong. No seasoned Mineviller would have accepted his verbal reaction toward the weather as full explanation for his attitude. Indeed, the common sense of the people makes them know that any true or imagined cause for grievance is likely to be rationalized into an opinion of the town. They habitually look for hidden causes when such expressions are made. Typical diagnoses are the following:

He isn't feeling well these days.

I know what's eating her. She wasn't invited to a certain party last week.

Anybody would say nice things about Mineville if he made as much as that guy.

He's sore because he lost his job.

He'd better be satisfied. He couldn't earn his salt elsewhere.

His business ain't prospering as it might.

His girl turned him down.

She ain't gettin' away very big with the stuck-ups. That's what's wrong.

The old fossil! He'd be a man without a country if he left Mineville.

He's never been anywhere else. That's why he likes it here.

He made a fool of himself when he got drunk at the dance last Saturday night. He'll get over it.

While there is some lack of sincerity in statements of attitudes toward the town, most of the people are quite frank, and many of them are brutally frank, about the matter. A large discrepancy between an expressed and the actual explanation is most often due to rationalizing or self-deception. The obvious candor of the following statement, which

may be considered no more than typical in frankness, illustrates this point:

No, I don't like this town. It's a damned poor place.

Well, I've left many times but I always returned somehow.

I'm like a horse that won't stay in a good pasture but will stay in a poor one.

I stayed two years in California. I just drifted from place to place. It's wonderful down there.

Well, I didn't intend to come back but there was a panic down in Los Angeles. I drifted north a short way but in a few days the hard times had hit that place. And I kept on moving north and the hard times kept on catching up with me until I started east. But it wasn't long until I was driven from place to place and landed here. I didn't intend to stay. I was just staying for a visit but now I've been here over a year and a half.

This is a poor town. I could be much better off most anywhere else. I guess there must be something I like about it. I think the main thing is that I am used to things here.

I came here in '91.

The "high cost of living" vies with the weather for first place as a reason for condemning Mineville. The large number of "bad accounts" resulting from extensive use of credit contributes to raise the cost of the necessities of life to a point much in excess of that in neighboring towns.<sup>1</sup>

Next to the weather and the exorbitant prices of necessities nothing causes more general dissatisfaction with Mineville than the lack of privacy to which its residents must submit themselves. "Everybody knows your business in this town" is a statement made with monotonous frequency. Perhaps there is not a mature resident who has not used these words many times and with various degrees of jest, anger, and disgust. And appended to it often appears "Be-

<sup>1</sup> This matter will be treated in the following chapter.

lieve me! If I ever get out of this town I'm going to a big place. No more of this small-town stuff for me!"

As has been said, the causes for all these attitudes of dissatisfaction are more complicated than the people reveal. Nevertheless, something is added to our understanding of Mineville by being able to think of this predominant reaction toward the town in terms of typical persons who are disposed to find "everything" to be unsatisfactory; who do not see cherished worlds to conquer in Mineville; who react very strongly against "small-town stuff"; who are physically or temperamentally distressed by the disagreeable weather and high altitude; who object vigorously to the local high cost of living; and who are not succeeding in the business of making money or in social status.

#### WHERE PEOPLE HAVE GONE AND DESIRE TO GO

Much as the "small-town stuff" of Mineville is criticized, fully three-fourths of those who leave after having acquired a lasting interest in the community life go to small towns. This fact is revealed by a study of addresses of out-of-town subscribers of the *Mineville Mail*—a weekly paper which could be of regular interest only to those who have lived for a number of years in the community. Here we have a selection of a particular sort of environment which does not seem to be attributable to chance. Rather it appears that the people have become conditioned to small-town life, and so they tend to seek it when making a change of residence. It is evidence of a deep-rooted small-town psychology which has sometimes been recognized in the term "the small-town mind." Those who have used this term, however, have had a tendency to imply a certain inferiority of small-town people.

Few emigrants from Mineville have gone east of the Mississippi River, most of them settling west of the Rocky Mountains. California has the strongest lure and truly is pictured by many Minevillers as the nearest approach to heaven on earth, the haven of their fondest dreams. Some old rheumatics are among the few who have visited that state, and have discovered that their idealization was not matched by the reality. These persons made hurried trips back home because the dampness of the Pacific Coast aggravated rather than relieved their aching joints. In their disappointment they learned that the dry atmosphere of the forlorn old Mineville which they had sought to leave was, after all, a panacea for their afflictions. Still, the California craze grips most of the people. And with visions of green foliage and delightful weather almost the year round in contrast to a growing season which is officially listed at but sixty days added to ten months of brutally changeable, disagreeable, and cold weather, it is not strange that Mineville should suffer by comparison. But there is no doubt that much of the general dissatisfaction is due to the community habit of assuming that Mineville and the state have a monopoly of the disagreeable weather. For residents in climes equally severe as a rule take their weather very much for granted.

Women seem to be much more anxious to leave town than men. Many of them say that their chief reason for wanting to leave is their desire to "get" their husbands "out of the mines." To quote one of them:

I'm not crazy about this town but I could stand it if Fred could get work some place other than the mines. My goodness! When I was single and saw how men died from miner's consumption I never thought I would marry a miner. I want to get Fred away from these mines as soon as possible and the only way to do it is to get him out of town. The worst of it is that he likes them and so he's not anxious



to leave. But I'll not stop nagging till we get out of town. Fred's health is good yet, but then he is young. The mines killed his father and I don't intend to have them kill him.

More or less serious disagreement between husband and wife because one wishes to leave town while the other wishes to remain is a common occurrence. Marriages of native sons and "outsiders" are particularly productive of such friction because the native son is ordinarily well adjusted to the town whereas his mate is likely to be openly antagonistic to it. Among other things, this gives rise to complaining wives who tend or wish to make long trips "to see mother" which their husbands can ill afford. A man who is a partner in one of these mixed marriages said:

My wife can be darned unreasonable about wanting me to give up my business here when I would have nothing for me in California. I want to leave as well as she does but I'm not going to leave the place where I can make a good living for a place where I might make a hundred a month. And then, there is the matter of friendships. I am getting to the stage where I like my old friends—the friends of my younger days. I really don't care to lose my friends here, even with the inducement of the California climate.

You can't blame everyone for wanting to leave Mineville and this disagreeable climate.

Because California does not offer opportunities for making a living to all departing Minevillers who would like to live there, other western states tend to be chosen as "next best" by those who do not settle elsewhere in the state. Washington State is a particular favorite if we are to accept the numbers of *Mineville Mails* sent to that state as a criterion—forty-two being sent to California and forty-eight to Washington.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A further observation on the mailing list of the *Mineville Mail* reveals a strong tendency of *émigrés* to stay in the state. The precise circulation in the state, however, and that to the many other states of the United States may be had by consulting chap. ix, "The Printed Page."

## CHAPTER IV

### THE STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE

#### THE COST OF LIVING

The most persistent problem which confronts the average Mineville adult is that of "making ends meet on a working-man's wages." In a house-to-house canvass no topic was found upon which everyone was more prone to talk. After having discussed the weather and health, the cost of living was almost certain to receive attention in considerable detail. There was a monotonous sameness about the trend of argument, even to precise wording. "Things are sure high in this town," a resident would begin, and then he would proceed to condemn the local tradition of seeking credit, which would usually lead him to expose the infamy of some of his townsfolk who do not pay their bills.

What, then, is the cost of living for the average family in Mineville? Answer to this question is fraught with difficulties related to defining what constitutes a "living"—which cannot be entered into at this place. In the rough, however, it may be said that the cost of living for the average family is the family income, for a hand-to-mouth existence is characteristic in the community.

But the necessary cost of a decent living in Mineville is not high. This is shown in the following statement by a man who occupied one of the better positions in the community:

People around here make me tired when they complain about the cost of living. Some things are high, even unreasonably high, but at that the people have only themselves to blame. With the use of a little common horse-sense they can get by on very little in this town. I'll



tell you how "the wife" does it. She keeps a budget and keeps our complete living expenses down to \$100 a month, and this includes \$20 rent, our clothes, expense of running the automobile and everything. There is no excuse for spending more. My two kids go to school looking as well dressed as the rest. But it takes headwork. In the first place, the grocery stores give 10 per cent discount for cash and we take advantage of that while most people don't. Then, paying cash means another saving, too, because you buy less when you have to fork the money out of your pocket to pay on the spot for what you buy. Both Nixon and Duffman say that those who run charge accounts are the best customers because they aren't so careful. They would like to have us run bills because they know we are "good pay" and they would sell us more.

I can show you families with two in the family whose eats come to \$90 a month. I have no sympathy for such people when they complain. Everything the grocer suggests they buy. They just don't know how to manage, that's all. Why, "the wife" has often said she could manage all our expenses on \$80 a month without any hardship, if I wish, but I'm satisfied with spending \$100 a month. I'm used to certain things you might call luxuries and I couldn't have them on less.

This case indicates that a family of four can maintain a higher-than-average social position in the community by the expenditure of but \$100 per month. Other cases might be cited. For instance, Mr. and Mrs. Jackson, who are childless and own their own home, maintain a position in the "near four hundred" with a monetary outlay of \$90 per month. Then, Mr. and Mrs. Everitts lived just below this position upon \$75 per month while they lived in the McDonald Apartments at a rent of \$25.

Figures such as the foregoing show that the cost of living in Mineville need not be high and that a family of modal<sup>1</sup> size with the modal income—from \$1,500 to \$1,900—should

<sup>1</sup> *Modal*: that part of the range of distribution which includes the greatest number of cases.

be able to "make ends meet" without much strain. It is the stress of making large payments upon radios, automobiles, homes, and "building and loans" along with the poor management described by Mr. X which accounts mainly for the fact that most of the people of Mineville lead a hand-to-mouth existence.

Rents are very low even when all of the habitable houses in town are occupied. The highest rent is \$50 per month, the next highest is \$45, and many live in cozy little homes

TABLE V

\$	0-\$	500	153
	500-	1,000	98
	1,000-	1,500	71
	1,500-	2,500	34
	2,500-	5,000	17
	5,000-	10,000	2
Total number of homes			375

for \$10 and \$15. The average, however, is about \$20. These figures take on added meaning when it is known that about one-third of the families are renters.

The instability of the town discourages the building of homes—particularly of high-priced ones. Indeed, a home valued at more than \$2,000 is most difficult to dispose of at its true value. The distribution of homes according to their assessed valuations is as shown in Table V.

In their typical complaining about the high cost of living in Mineville the people refer especially to the high costs of food and wearing apparel. Their error is that they do not take cognizance of the fact that, in the long run, low costs of housing offset the effect of these high prices.

## BUSINESS AND "SMALL-TOWN STUFF"

The rebellion against high prices at home encourages a large mail-order business and much buying in neighboring towns and cities. These high prices result mainly from the inability of the merchant to control the credit system under the intimate personal basis of social relationships in the community. The people not only request but even demand credit. Self-righteously a hoisting engineer said:

If I give a store my business when I've got money, I've got credit coming when I'm out of work; as long as it's not my fault that I'm out of work. I don't see why a store has a right to make profit on my trade when I am prosperous and not owe me anything when hard luck hits me. The benefits should work both ways.

On every hand the merchant is assailed by such arguments. If he gives credit to anyone (and all excepting the J. C. Penney chain store and one grocery store do) he loses the trade of the man to whom he refuses that privilege, for such refusal is construed as a personal affront. Regardless of how large their unpaid bills may be and whether they show signs of intent to pay or not, the people demand to be treated as if they always meet all their obligations. And to refuse to give them credit is to drive them to a store where they will be treated as if they were honest, even though it be out of town or a mail-order house. They know that it "gets all over town" when a store "closes down on them."

Although the large credit business of the town causes necessities of life to be approximately 10 per cent higher than they would be in the absence of the many bad accounts that result, it is also a boon to the needy during "hard times." The hand of public opinion would fall wrathfully upon a merchant who would refuse to tide a family over such a crisis, if the head of the family had been "good pay" during

his periods of employment. A godsend to people who would have to seek charity were they living in a large city, this same charge system, says a leading grocer, causes "three-fourths of the worry of business management in Mineville and is the main factor in its business failures."

In order to know when to refuse further credit to an individual, or how to collect without offending, the merchant must be extremely tactful. In his cautiousness he makes many costly mistakes. Once a customer owes him a bill, the payment of which is somewhat in arrears, the merchant tends to give him credit for fear of antagonizing him and losing the principal. The net result is often that the original indebtedness is multiplied several times and the final loss very great. In fact, numerous unpaid accounts in excess of a thousand dollars are matters of common knowledge and embitter the main body of the people, who are quite honest. A resident who is known to be "good pay" said:

I don't see why I should pay such high prices merely so the grocer can feed other people free. I can name you a number of prominent people who run around in automobiles, who owe everybody in town. Those people don't have to deny themselves anything.

The grip of this practice of seeking credit stands in high relief in Mineville's history. Old-timers state that the habit of running bills rather than paying cash dates back to the earliest days of the town. It was a necessity and worked well under pioneer conditions, they say, but it has degenerated. They lament that a system which is so convenient and so helpful in times of temporary distress is abused rather than controlled.

The cyclical character of the industrial history of the town has had much to do with the credit custom. The income of the average resident is irregular. For a generation

the community was kept alive to a large extent by leasers who were obliged to work many months before they could "get out a shipment" of ore. Such men had to have credit and most of them were honest, but when one of them failed to meet his obligations the merchant suffered a heavy loss. Equally seasonal is the income of a host of farmers whose debts are usually "as good as gold" to the merchant. Then, too, the average miner throughout the years has had periods of unemployment which ran into many weeks during the course of the year, and even when at steady work the monthly pay days were too far apart for cash funds to last the full time under poor management. And, finally, when a man changed employers or a stranger was hired, there was a practice of "holding back two weeks' pay," which made it a period of six weeks before he received returns from his labor. But nowadays even though a bimonthly pay day for miners is a state law, the old "charge it" habit continues.

The establishment of the J. C. Penney chain store and a cash grocery in 1930 has been felt by local merchants and may eventually force the organization of a merchant's credit association. One of the most obvious effects of the Penney Store is the competition it is offering to the mail-order business and to stores in the larger neighboring cities, but even then it is said to have prices 10 per cent higher than in other stores of the same chain system. As for the cash grocery, the chances seem to be that it may yet go the way of other cash groceries of the past; in other words, the cyclical economic character of the town and the habit and demand for credit may force it to become a credit store.

Business competition is keen along Main Street. Failures are not infrequent. For a while there were four coal-dealers, but two were driven from the field. One of these latter said

that he could not remain in the coal business and sell two thousand pounds to the ton. His imputation that the others were giving short weight was later borne out in an actual test—in one case at least.

The fuel bill is of large moment in Mineville, owing to the many poorly built houses and the long and rigorous cold season. Even in normal times some men utilize a few days of unemployment by chopping a supply of wood in the neighboring forests. And during the 1930-31 depression wood suddenly became a serious competitor of coal. In fact, forest officials estimated that seventy-five hundred cords were hauled to Mineville. That fuel may thus be secured during periods of unemployment or after working hours is a valuable asset to Minevillers in "hard times." It marks a distinct advantage which they have over their large-city brothers. They are not so far from the original sources of certain basic commodities that they have to depend upon a complicated system of distribution in order to secure them.

#### CRISES IN THE STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE

Mineville has passed through many crises, as was indicated in an earlier chapter. In the decade from 1920 to 1930 alone there were four major crises. In 1920 the war-time manganese boom was on the wane, causing much unemployment. At the same time deflation of farm values caused a number of farmers to "go broke."

January of 1924 brought the insolvency of the Mineville State Bank. A tragic gloom was cast over the community as many people lost all or nearly all of their savings. Six years later this bank had paid but 50 per cent to depositors, who, of course, received no interest upon their money over that period. Shortly after the bank failed there was a wave



of deposit selling, with some going for as low as 10 per cent. Because of the slow rate at which payments have been made, some of those who purchased deposits upon 25 per cent of their face value believe that they could have invested their money to better advantage.

Only a year later, in February, 1925, the mill of the Mineville Mining Company burned, overnight throwing most of the miners in the community out of work. Many were unemployed for months, and some went to Gold to return a year following when the Salmon Mining Company started a small mill.

Then, with the sting of the bank failure of 1924 still fresh, the First State Bank of Mineville failed on February 12, 1930. Business men estimated that about four-fifths of the checks they had been receiving were drawn upon this, the largest of the two banks in town. Most of the deposits were small, but were very important to the people, who when questioned, so often said: "Only a couple of hundred but all I had." One workingman, who had suffered a loss in 1924 and another in this instance, was so overcome that he went to Main Street in search of the cashier that he might shoot him. Feeling was so high against this official that an erroneous rumor to the effect that he had been punched by a young man easily gained acceptance. Frequent suggestions that he should be lynched were to be heard. Not until public opinion had passed fever heat was he accorded faint sympathy for having lost his personal fortune in the catastrophe, and even months later there was no scarcity of persons who maintained staunchly that he "got what was coming to him." For everywhere was dejection, bitterness, and heaviness of heart. Business had fallen off, and even those who had lost nothing had become more conservative in their expenditures.

Needless to say, the people began to doubt the safety of the remaining bank of the town—the only one in the county. Its cashier was in a precarious position. His bank was in excellent condition but people sought every chance to discredit it, and he provided them with many opportunities. Immediately upon the failure of his competitor, for instance, he announced an increase in rates for the cashing of checks. Then, rightly or wrongly, he was accused time and time again of being very disagreeable to those who had overdrawn their accounts. To what extent the charges brought against him were due to the oversensitiveness of the populace or to sheer malice we cannot say. At any rate, it appears that his bank was literally talked to death. Even persons who were sufficiently rational to concede its strength transferred their business to out-of-town banks. And slowly, under the influence of broken faith in small independent banks, and the mounting dislike of an influential part of the community for this man, money was withdrawn and business done out of town until the bank closed its doors on November 10, 1930, less than nine months after its sister on the other side of Main Street. Another spell of gloom was cast over the community, but this time it was not tragic to so many people as was the previous failure, from which depositors expected but twenty-five cents on the dollar as compared with their anticipation of all or almost all of their money in the last instance.

Not a few large depositors had had only small deposits in Mineville banks following the 1924 failure. After the crisis of February, 1930, very few large deposits were carried in the remaining bank. Postal savings which grew from \$30,000 in 1925 to \$46,000 in 1928 received great impetus following the February failure and again after that of November.

Only about a month after the last failure, however, a new bank was established. This one is an affiliate of a large bank in Gold and of the First Bank Stock Corporation. Although it promises to be a success, there is no doubt that building-and-loan companies will continue to be the devices through which perhaps the majority of the people will save their money. Bank failures have done much to encourage the building-and-loan vogue. One such company alone has nearly one hundred accounts in town.

In all, seven banks have failed in the history of the immediate community. In addition to those discussed above the first bank of the town failed in the eighties, two failed in the nineties (one at Crystal and one at Mineville), and the Junction Bank became insolvent in 1924. Tragedy followed in the wake of each.

Other economic disasters which are not so widespread and ordinarily not so catastrophic are, of course, common. Those arising from the strong foothold which investment in stocks and bonds have in the community are cases in point. Indeed, such securities are discussed on every hand, even by people who are never able to invest. The *Wall Street Journal* and similar periodicals have a number of subscribers in the community, and the phenomenon of people waiting anxiously for the daily reports from the stock market is a commonplace. Previous to the war it was mainly the more well-to-do residents who felt that it was within their province to make such investments, but during the last fifteen years the whole populace has become stock and bond conscious. And so it is not surprising that the stock-market crash of 1929 worked havoc with the savings of some of the leading citizens and with those of a number of ordinary workers as well. The main investment loss brought by the present depression to

the community as a whole, however, has been due to the wholesale need of investors to discontinue payment upon instalment securities, and to cash in at a loss.

Besides the major crises mentioned there are yearly unemployment periods which seriously affect the earnings of men. Owing to seasonal demand for manganese dioxide ore in the battery business, Mineville has been able to rely upon approximately five months of full load, with the rest very uncertain. In the words of an official of the Salmon Mining Company:

From the first of August to Christmas is the busy time. During that time we average about a hundred men on our pay-roll.

In 1927 our yearly average was 73, the top figure 102 and the low figure 35.

The average man we employ works 300 days—that is, the average on an average of 73 men.

At peak production the Moonlight Mining Company employs slightly fewer men than does the Salmon Mining Company but its seasonal variation is much greater.

To those unaccustomed to the seven-day week, three hundred days of work per year will not appear to present an unemployment problem. And, to be sure, it should not do so if the unemployment occurred one day per week instead of in periods of weeks or months at a time. But with the prevailing habit of hand-to-mouth living in Mineville, people do not have a reserve with which to meet even expected long periods of unemployment such as arise each winter.

A saving grace in the unemployment situation is the order in which men are “laid off.” Other things being equal, local single men and strangers tend to be most at the mercy of the fluctuating demand for labor while married men with families tend to be least affected. Exceptions to this rule are

the exceptionally "good workers" who are rarely out of work during the dullest of periods whether they are married or not and the poor and undependable workers who have great difficulty in obtaining employment at any time.

But crises have been so characteristic a part of the life of the community that the people, while always looking for "good times," are very susceptible to rumors of "hard times." For instance, when the news first became public that there would be no market for local silver, zinc, and lead ores for an indefinite period after November 1, 1930, a Main Street merchant felt effects which caused him to speak as follows:

I never saw such a town. When a few men are thrown out of work or when it is even rumored that they are going to be out of work, you can notice the difference in the store at once. The day following one of those scares hardly anyone comes into the store, and it's the same for about ten days. The Penney Store manager says he never saw such a place. The people don't spend a cent they don't have to when one of those hard-times rumors first hits the town.

Industrial accidents, sickness, and death produce the remainder of the most common crises in the struggle for existence. In recent years several families have received \$6,800 as workmen's compensation for death of the breadwinner. At present there are eight widowed mothers who draw from \$20 to \$35 per month from the county mothers' pension fund (\$20 per month for one child and \$5.00 for each additional).

The worker receives \$2.00 per day in cases of minor accidents, after he has been off duty for ten days. Unfortunately, many of these so-called "minor" accidents seriously affect a man's health and efficiency. In the words of a worker:



Because a fellow is able to make a bluff at work before ten days have passed his case is not even recorded in the statistics. Look at me. I was off less than ten days and yet my back will never be well again.

#### WORKING CONDITIONS

A young miner said:

There is fascination about working in a mine. That's why I keep on working in them when I know they will probably ruin my health. I work in some wet places and so rheumatism bothers me now and then but I'm in pretty good shape. Look at those hands. The callouses haven't had a chance to soften in fifteen years and I hope they don't soften in the next fifteen unless I can get advanced to a higher position in a mine.

Mines are rated as dangerous but I have a feeling of peace and calm in them. I have a feeling of being tucked in the earth far from most of the turmoil and petty things of this civilized world. With a partner or two I work in a drift and I never know what we are going to hit in the next blast. There's romance to that. I've prospected, you know. I know what it is to work day after day inspired by a feeling that I have only a few more feet of ground to burrow into before I have a fortune. Every stroke of my hammer on a drill and every shovelful of dirt I would throw was made easy because of the inspiration that seemed to trickle into my arms. It's not quite so exciting to work for someone else but it is even fascinating to discover ore for a corporation. Boy, I was thrilled when we opened up that ore for the company! There it was before our eyes: ore that no man had ever seen before. There is a feeling of power in exploring the earth where no man has ever been before and there's the satisfaction of feeling that you are useful in this world when you take out ore. A miner's lot is not so bad if he keeps his health and if he only earned more money.

All I ask is reasonable working conditions and a boss that gives me credit for a reasonable day's work and for a little sense of my own. Sometimes, though, it seems as if they value everything but a man's health. Some of those machines almost shake the muscles off a fellow's arms; after a shift you feel paralyzed. And I've worked in places where the gas was so bad that other men fainted. Such things are a



lot better than they were in the old days when nearly every man who didn't die of pneumonia seemed to die of miner's consumption or mill consumption sooner or later.

The average miner of the district agrees that the mines now under operation are quite healthful, as mines go. In regard to the mills, however, the opinion seems to be that they are unhealthful. Several cases of tuberculosis from the dust of the mill are pointed out. But complaint at even the best working conditions is to be expected, especially from certain cranks who are well known in the community.

Miners say that they must work harder in Mineville than when following their occupation elsewhere, that the desirability of the local mines over others is counterbalanced by the amount of work required. Some notion of this strenuousness may be derived from a contrast between the admittedly hard work of the farm and that of the wage-earner in the mining industry. John Williams, once a prosperous farmer of the district but now a millworker, aptly draws this contrast and brings out the human side of a worker's struggle against odds:

I came out here in 1904. I was just a kid then—only twenty-one. Lots has happened since then. I spent fifteen of the years on the ranch and they were happy years, too. I could never ask for more than the kind of life I had on the ranch. It sure was fun. I would be up at between four and five in the morning and after feeding some stock I would be ready for breakfast, and then after a few chores maybe I would take a little rest in the form of a nap. It sure was great. And I was my own boss—that was the best part of it. Say, I have worked twice as hard in the last three years in the mines and mills as I ever worked on the farm. They can say all they want about the hard work of the farm, it ain't as bad as working for someone else. And, remember, there are long winters when all you have to do is feed your stock and then lay around the house and read or else go hunting. It's hard work, all right, but there's a satisfaction in it that makes it easy com-

pared with working for wages. When you can see yourself getting ahead like you can on the farm, life seems worth while, but when you work for wages you spend all you make and the only progress you feel is that you are getting older. Why, if I had sold my stock and one of my ranches the year before the bank failure ruined me I could have had \$50,000 in cold cash besides my other ranch. There's a lot of difference between being that well fixed and working for wages like I am now. But, I'm not worrying. I'll make her somehow, and if I don't that'll be all right, too. Just now I'm thinking of putting a thousand in this new mining company up here. What do you think of that as an investment?

I think it is good, too. I know "Glick" and Engman and Rickey and that bunch are careful investors and I'm willing to take a chance with them.

Well, I'll tell ya, I was hit pretty hard by that bank failure. You know it's quite a blow to lose the fruits of fifteen years' labor in an hour. The wife and I just fooled around all that winter and tried to forget by hunting and fishing because there was nothing else for us to do.

Well, it took just about a year for me to get over that shock. But, I've not given up yet. I'll get another start. You know I have a brother who is a wealthy banker and he says to me, "John, whenever you see anything good, just let me know and I will let you have the money on the spot without asking any questions." And so, I'm just lookin' around but I haven't seen anything just yet which seemed to be worth the chance. But I'll find it. It takes a little time, that's all.

Three years later John, like most of us, was still "looking" for an opportunity—and, unfortunately, he had lost a thousand dollars in the South Crystal mine to which he referred.

#### THE EMPLOYER AND THE COMMUNITY

The story of corporation domination is written deeply into the life of the community. The local situation is but a speck in the involved economic network of the state which is taken for granted to be "dominated" by one company—

the Standard Copper Mining Company. The Gibraltar Power Company has a dictating monopoly of the electrical power of the state but through an interlocking directorate it functions, for most purposes, as a part of the "S.C.M." In one of America's most reliable periodicals Oswald Garrison Villard, the dean of American journalism, has depicted the domination of these companies in a freedom which is not dared by any of the leading papers of the state. These companies either own or control the press and its policies in the state, and most of the people dare only to whisper their dislike for the situation. In describing this economic super-government Mr. Villard said:

It is doubtful if in any other State the press is itself so deeply involved in the great economic struggle which is at the bottom of our political life. The one test of a daily or weekly, and for that matter of every politician in the State, is whether it or he belongs to the Company. . . . Today, the influence and power of the Company are not confined to its newspapers. Besides its mines and smelters it has lumber interests, owns great tracts of land and forests, wire-mills, mercantile establishments, banks and their allied interests in all of the leading cities, is identified utterly with its sister-company, [the Gibraltar Power Company], whose lines serve more than one hundred towns in the State, and is in friendly contact with the leading people in every place of importance. Served by a legion of political aides in every community, it is well-nigh invincible when it sets its heart on anything. It permeates the social life of the entire state and can accomplish great things merely by starting a whispering campaign against those whom it opposes.

It is not strange then that, externally at least, Mineville's leaders fall in line with "the Company's" policies—and the workmen are obliged to follow suit. An incident of June, 1930, is illustrative. A petition had been circulated over the state in an effort to initiate a popular vote upon a workmen's compensation measure. The requisite number of

signers had been secured in the fifty-six counties of the state but the measure was never voted upon. For hardly had the ink of the signatures dried when a state-wide withdrawal petition was in circulation. The workers had no rational alternative than to remove their names. Well did they know the power which requested that they "reconsider" the matter. Even those who admitted the obvious defects in the measure resented the fact that they were not trusted to exercise their own free wills at the polls. "But it's no use to complain," they said. "One's bread and butter is more important than the right to vote." And those who thought the withdrawal petition justified could only answer that "a bad measure should be killed before a lot of ignorant voters make it a law." They took little cognizance of the fact that similar laws exist in other states and are regarded as progressive.

This case suggests the larger economic network in which Mineville finds itself. In subtle and devious ways pressure can be brought to bear upon community leaders and through them to the ordinary workers. Mineville by no means has control of her own destiny.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This so-called "domination" is said to be engaged in by the company partly in self-defense against farming and other interests which are disposed to throw an unwarranted burden of taxation upon the mining industry. The situation is often described so that it appears to be very unwholesome, but there is no doubt that were not the S.C.M. in control some other interests would be and the conditions might even be worse. After all, the S.C.M.—and particularly its sister-company, the Gibraltar Power—takes a sort of paternalistic interest in the welfare and prosperity of the state—an interest which its opponents are loathe to concede. Any organization so large is bound to have numerous shortcomings in its relation to public welfare. To focus attention upon these alone is to secure a distorted picture. But we have no interest either in justifying or in condemning the Company. Our concern is with the "bread-and-butter issues" of the people of Mineville, which cannot properly be discussed apart from the Company and local employers as well.

Still, aside from the influence of giant corporations, there always has been a local dominating corporation which has seriously affected the struggle for existence in Mineville. Even when numerous employers have been in the field, this leading figure has been able to secure its wishes through interlocking directorates or by means of coercion. Such a situation may be much less prevalent today than in periods of the past, but no Mineviller who dares to speak his mind honestly will deny that the pressure exists at present and that sometimes it is very acute.

Whether or not employer-employee relations in the community as a whole are wholesome relative to those elsewhere is difficult to say. Whatever be true, the strike has never been vigorously used by local workers. In times of prosperity, when the men are powerful enough to succeed with a strike, they are inhibited by a fear that the employer will "get even" during "hard times." The employers, on the other hand, feel obliged to keep apace with regional wage scales both in order to keep men and because dissatisfaction among workers is inefficient. It is partly because of these facts that labor-unions have become *passé* in Mineville. Forty years ago the Miners' Union was the strongest organization in the community. After the panic of 1893 it led a lingering existence until 1910 and then died. There was no important function which it could perform throughout the long depression periods when labor was in no position to make demands of employers. Later, there was some attempt of the I.W.W. to gain a foothold, but both the employers and the main body of the workers resisted this intrusion.

The peak of the miner's wage has been \$5.75 per day. This figure was first reached during the war. Then, as labor's bargaining power grew weak after the war the scale was re-



duced, not again to reach the peak until the spring of 1929. But, a year later, the wage had dropped to \$4.75 and then continued to drop still further. Employers "cut" wages as they are able, and labor likewise requests (not demands) increases when it is in the ascendancy. If a "cut" comes when labor's bargaining power is not particularly weak, the employers are much abused and there is talk of refusing to work, but, during a serious depression such as of 1930, the men were so much interested in holding their jobs that "cuts" were accepted almost without complaint.

The worker is very much at the mercy of the employers of the community. As a rule he intends or expects to live in Mineville for many years, if not for the remainder of his life. Thus, if he "gets in bad" with an employer he may suffer years later when in dire need of employment. One worker well illustrated feeling upon this matter when he said: "I ain't sayin' nothin' against anybody in this town. Things get back you know, and you can never tell who is going to be in a position to hurt you someday."

Commonly, it is said with some truth that the small town does not have the very rich or very poor. Mineville, at least, has no millionaire and under its typical neighborliness extreme cases of destitution are not likely to occur unless unfortunates are too proud to make known their predicaments. Too, there is no soul-squelching and demoralizing slum, those persons and families with the lowest standards of living being scattered very much residentially. But with all that, the tragedy of being out of work for long periods is part and parcel of the community life. In the winter of 1932 Mineville found itself with fifty needy families, that is, one family out of six or seven was in need of assistance. This serious situation was handled entirely without aid from



outside the community. In fact, neither the Salvation Army nor any other charitable agency has ever helped Mineville's poor even though Salvation Army members who solicit regularly in Mineville say that its people contribute very generously. Humble Mineville is supposed to be self-sufficient enough to take care of itself and to help the poor of the proud larger cities besides.

It is worth while to note that even though residents are in no danger of being evicted from their homes, and the stores are still willing to give them credit, they may suffer keenly because of unemployment. The case of Mrs. Field, a miner's wife, may be taken as illustrative. She was so sensitive about her poverty that she did not care to be seen on the street. Her reaction indicates why some persons have been led to say, "If I have to be poor I want to be poor in a city where everybody doesn't know I'm 'broke.' " Her hard-luck story, which also suggests probable personal discrimination of a boss against her husband, is as follows:

It seems to me that hard luck has been with us ever since I lost the diamond out of my ring last Fall. First I lost the diamond, then my husband was sick and couldn't work for six weeks, and, when he had recovered, he had no job. Then we thought we might get along on the money we had in the bank, but the bank failed, and we lost our savings. But that wasn't enough hard luck it seems, for the children took sick and gave us expensive doctor bills on top of those we had for my husband. Things have surely been "blue" for us.

Yes, he has a job now but he may not have it long. Krenz is in charge while Johns [boss] is away and he hired my husband. When Johns comes back my husband may be fired. My husband went all over looking for work—to Copperton, Mormonville and all around—but he could find nothing.

I never thought we would ever have such troubles. It is terrible. I wish we could leave town. There is nothing to do but to run bills because we must live.

No, I don't think I'll be going out very soon. You know, I do not like to be seen on the street lately since we owe so many bills.

Three months later Mr. Field had been "rustling" for a job for several weeks without success. Then he departed from town with a knapsack on his back. Everywhere he went he found the army of unemployed. After many hardships he secured employment in another state and his family departed from the community.

The dependence of the worker upon the good will of the boss and the extreme to which discrimination is sometimes carried is shown in the following instance in which a man was unable to secure a job in Mineville for three and one-half years.

The other employers around here told me that they didn't dare hire me while I was "on the outs" with "the Company" because they depended upon "the Company" for favors. . . . When I was "on the outs" with "the Company," there were people in this town who wouldn't speak to me. And you should have seen the way they made over me as soon as I was reinstated with "the Company." Within two days I was offered two engineer jobs by other outfits.

The blacklist is illegal in the state but this case indicates that it exists informally. It is an extreme case, however, both in that it involved all local employers and in that it lasted for so long a time. While discrimination regularly takes place which is very serious to the persons concerned, there is no reason to suppose that it is unusually prevalent in Mineville. As a rule, local employers are quite humane. Besides realizing more clearly the personal tragedy involved in hiring and "firing" any particular man than do employers in a large city, they feel some pressure in the unpleasant publicity given to injustice in a small town. Still, it may be that "pull" is more important in Mineville than in a large

city. For in the large city an enterprising worker of more than average ability or industry can usually find some way of earning a living, whereas in Mineville the number of jobs is so strictly limited that by no amount of enterprise is he likely to secure steady employment if the few employers in town are perchance against him. For this reason the employer in Mineville is in a very crucial position. His whims and friendships unavoidably and vitally affect the bread and butter of other men. And he may be sure that his injustices will live long after him since talk about good and cruel bosses of forty years ago is characteristic among old-timers.

## CHAPTER V

### THE ROUTINE OF LIFE

A traditional notion of the small town is that it is very restful as compared with a large city. Peace and quiet are supposed to prevail with a vengeance. Small-town life is thought to be so lacking in complexity that there is little about it to tax the nerves of ordinary human beings. What a haven for the tired urbanite whose nerves are torn by the hubbub of city life!

But a city dweller is due for a disillusionment if he settles in Mineville with such expectations. Offhand he may be impressed that individual city people are much busier than individual Minevillers, an illusion which easily arises from the contrast between the great bulk of activity and noise in the city and the small number of persons and things moving and making noise in Mineville. Soon, however, it will dawn upon him that the idleness of a few Main Street loiterers must not be taken as a representative sample of the leisure of the people as a whole. He will find that Minevillers are engaged in an intense and serious struggle for existence during most of their waking hours and that they are quite busy during their leisure time. He will find that the city woman who had sought a quiet vacation as the guest of a small-town friend need not have been joking when she complained that she had to return to the city in order to rest her nerves, for the small town holds a continual round of social activities which are required and not optional. Indeed, it is doubtful that any excepting the most isolated small-townners in Amer-

ica ever lived the empty lives which outsiders have supposed—and which even many of them have believed.

A certain amount of monotony is inevitable in life. The small town has no monopoly of it. Highly routinized conditions of workaday life are among the chief causes of monotony, and surely the city is more highly routinized in this respect than the small town. And, as for boredom, it seems to be largely a matter of the individual person concerned. As one Mineviller has said:

I might as well be bored in Mineville as in Chicago. I'm bored pretty much wherever I am. I'm bored because it is too quiet and there is nothing much going on in Mineville and bored by the continual and monotonous roar of things in the city. I'm not going to blame my boredom onto the place where I live. I'm just bored that's all.

Some people get adjusted to the city and they are bored in the small town; others get adjusted to the small town and they are bored in the city. I'm bored in both places and there's no need to be bored in either. I know people who get a big kick out of the city and I know a lot of people in this little town who are enjoying themselves most of the time. It depends mostly on the person himself. People make me tired who blame Mineville for being monotonous when their own dispositions are at fault. Excepting a few who have high ambitions that can't be satisfied here, you will find that most of these kickers are the kind that wouldn't have much peppy imagination wherever they might live. It looks as if bored city people blame life for their boredom, and bored Minevillers blame Mineville. Poor Mineville gets blamed for everything.

Those "crabs" who are always kicking about how dead and boring this town is should get out. This is a free country. They don't have to stay. Why don't they go to some place that doesn't bore them? The truth is that they are just as bored any place else and so when they leave they come back in time. It sure beats everything the way some of them stay here for fifty years and never stop complaining that there is nothing to do here.

I'm not saying that it isn't reasonable for a stranger to be bored at

first but when he gets acquainted and gets on to what is going on and what can be done, he can find plenty of interesting things to take up his leisure time—and it's not the same old thing over and over when you look at it from the inside.

#### THE ROUND OF EVENTS IN THE PAST

Prior to 1878 Mineville was almost exclusively a community of males. Pioneer conditions did much to determine the usual round of events of its inhabitants. The men lived in cabins and did their own housework. After work their activities varied little from day to day. When they did not spend their leisure time in their most important meeting place, the saloon, they usually met to play cards—gambling games more frequently than “sociable” games—in one another's cabins. And during good weather they often fished, had horse races, or indulged in contests of physical prowess, while, with the ingress of autumn, hunting had a great fascination for them. Of their few formal organizations, the Masonic lodge, established in 1867, was head and shoulders above all others and served as an expression of dignity and refinement in the distant outpost of civilization that was Mineville.

Women were so scarce in the early days that men stared at them almost as if they were circus freaks. “It was kind of nice to be so interesting,” said one pioneer woman, “but it made one uncomfortable to be stared at so. They seemed to be watching every movement I made. We surely were popular at the dances where so many of the men had to dance with men.”

But in 1878 and the years immediately following women came in large numbers, and in the course of a few years family life became the rule. The advent of women also gave rise to the Good Templars, a temperance society to which



the "best people in town" belonged for several years. This effort of the newly arrived women to reform a community of men had no small task before it. In mock rebellion a group of men drew up a code which expressed a profound belief of most of the pioneers in a statement that "every man has the right to become respectably drunk."

An old-timer summarized the main events of the early days as follows:

Before Crystal opened up [1882], horse-racing was the main event of the community. These races took place on any date set by those getting up the race. The occasion for a race was a bet and, of course, there was a great deal of gambling by the general public. People came from a hundred miles around to see the races and that was a long distance in those days of poor roads.

Miner's Union Day was the main day of the year after Crystal boomed. They have never had such large crowds together in the last twenty-five years as they used to have on the thirteenth of June each year. One year they had about 4,000 at a Miner's Union Day picnic.

From the start the customary holidays were observed—excepting Sunday. New Year's calling had a long vogue which ended in about 1900, but the most unique of long-obsolete practices on holidays is that during the earliest days Washington's Birthday was of sufficient moment that men "got drunk" in his honor.

Shortening of the stage distance to a railroad contact from many hundreds to thirty miles in 1883 did much to change the routine of life in the community. It provided the people with previously prohibitive manufactured articles. Too, it opened the way for industrial activity since lower grades of ore could then be mined at a profit. But the completion of the branch line directly to Mineville in 1887 appears to have wrought even greater changes. The "Golden

Age" of the community followed at once, show troupes frequented the locality, and circuses came.

Changes in the order of life of the people since the boom days immediately prior to the panic of 1893 may be summed up briefly. The most striking are those accompanying the greater leisure which resulted from establishment of the eight-hour day, the higher standard of living resulting from higher wages, the invention of labor-saving devices for the home, and the greatly facilitated contact with the outside world brought about by the automobile and the radio—most of which will be discussed elsewhere.

#### THE YEARLY ROUND OF EVENTS

In this larger outline those events which occur yearly in Mineville's round of affairs would not, for the most part, distinguish it from many other communities of similar size and latitude. And so, excepting a few larger occurrences, we must look to matters of detail for distinctive marks.

Starting with the first of the year, those events which take place upon a definite day and which are looked forward to by the whole or most of the community are (with their main characteristics):

*New Year's Eve, December 31.*—One of the outstanding dances of the year takes place. The New Year is ushered in amid the shooting of guns, the "whoopees" of young men, and the sounding of mill whistles and automobile horns. There is much hilarity all through the night.

*New Year's Day, January 1.*—A holiday or partial holiday for most of the men—much drinking—overeating at New Year's dinner a habit.

*Ground Hog Day, February 2.*—Half-seriously or jokingly the people are interested in the matter of the ground hog's having seen his shadow as an influence upon or index of the weather for six weeks ahead. There may be a dance in the evening since the many organiza-

tions which seek to raise money usually grasp every available excuse for "giving a dance."

*Lincoln's Birthday, February 12.*—Not a holiday. A large flag stands in front of most of the places of business along Main Street. School children have programs to which parents may be invited. The Woman's Club, the Rotary Club, or churches may have Lincoln programs and some stores may place pictures of Lincoln in their windows but, in the main, the most important event is the dance in the evening.

*Valentine's Day, February 14.*—Many Valentine postcards sold. Aside from the dance in the evening, this day receives merely passing notice from those past school age. In the schools much glee is had over the exchanging of Valentines, activity being concentrated upon them in the paper work of the lower and the art work of the upper grades.

*Washington's Birthday, February 22.*—Not a holiday. A large flag stands in front of most places of business along Main Street. Schools and organizations may have Washington programs, and some stores that have decorative materials left from past years when the day was taken more seriously may seize upon this as an opportunity to arrange attractive windows. As on most of Mineville's holidays, the dance in the evening is the outstanding event of the day.

*St. Patrick's Day, March 17.*—The Catholics give a dance and many wear green. There may also be a St. Patrick's Day dinner to augment the flow of money into the coffers of the church. But the dance is the principal event and the "best people in town turn out." Much drinking at the dance.

*Easter.*—Churches have Easter programs in which children "speak pieces." The women emerge with new spring regalia (Easter bonnets, etc.) at a church, or show, or at the dinner or dance on Easter Monday. Easter eggs and candies for the "kiddies."

*April Fool's Day, April 1.*—Many April fool's jokes are played. A dance is the main event.

*Junior Play.*—A theatrical is produced by the junior class of the high school each year in order to raise money with which to finance the "Junior Prom."

*Senior Play.*—A theatrical produced by the Senior class of the high school to a "full house" at the theater.

*High-School Commencement Exercises.*—Until recent years when

high-school graduates have become so numerous that a high-school diploma is no longer a mark of exceptional learning, "everybody in town" attended the high-school commencement exercises. Nowadays while five hundred people are usually present, occasionally [i.e., 1928] a mere handful of relatives and students is on hand. Perhaps an important inducement to attend these exercises has always been that they are free.

*Grade-School Commencement Exercises.*—Like the high-school commencement exercises, those of the grade school generally have a full house at the theater but of late years sometimes have a "poor crowd." Lack of other diversions and a free show contribute heavily to the prominence of the occasion.

*Junior Prom.*—The principal dance of the year. Admittance is had by invitation. Exclusion from this event is a mark of social discrimination. The élite of the town are present as well as many who attend but one dance a year.

*Alumni Dance.*—A very important dance given by the alumni of Crystal County High School. Much trouble is taken to decorate the gymnasium in which the dance is held.

*The Closing of School.*—School usually closes on the last Friday in May. The occasion is one of general happiness for children who have been promoted.

*Memorial Day.*—Memorial Day is a partial holiday. To some it is a day of sadness, to others it is a semi-gala occasion, and to still others it passes almost unnoticed. Instead of doing homage to the dead, a few men welcome the holiday as an opportunity to go fishing. It is not a picnic day in Mineville, however. The vigorous military tempo of the band music does much to make it a gala day. Several hundreds follow the band and the old soldiers and sailors to the cemetery. In the evening a large share of the people in town listen to a band concert on Main Street.

*Fourth of July, July 4.*—Although there have been times when Mineville has been almost deserted on July 4 owing to the huge celebration which was conducted in Gold, as a general thing Fourth of July is the day of greatest festivities. In 1929, 1,300 people paid admittance [\$1.00] to a Wild West rodeo conducted at the athletic field, and an airplane had receipts of over \$800 at the end of the day from charging passengers a dollar a minute for the experience of cir-

cling above the community. There is much drunkenness at the dance in the evening. Mining companies usually close for two or three days so that many of their employees may overcome drunkenness or continue to celebrate.

*Fish Fry Day, July 7 [1929].*—Fish Fry Day is one day of festivities which is unique of Mineville. Nearly every year the Crystal County Angler's Association conducts a picnic on the banks of Sand Creek, fifteen miles from Mineville, at which a meal of fried trout is served to all who attend. In 1929 over 1,200 persons—by actual count—passed the food-dispensing stands. For each picnic the same group of public-spirited citizens assumes the burden of catching the fish and preparing the meal. The event attracts persons from the entire county and even some from other counties. A dance is held in the evening in Mineville.

*Labor Day.*—Labor Day may or may not be a complete holiday, according to the inclinations of the mining companies. The stores always close. In 1928 and 1929 the American Legion posts of Mineville and Junction joined to conduct a picnic at Copperton at which about a thousand people from all parts of the county were in attendance. There is a dance in the evening in Mineville.

*The Opening of School.*—School children are excited and noisy. Upper classmen of the high school initiate Freshmen. The Freshmen boys are spanked and their hair is mutilated by clippers, while the girls have their faces and legs painted. As a final part of the initiation ceremonies the gaudy lot is obliged to do a lock step along Main Street.

Mothers breathe a sigh of relief because their "noisy kids won't be hanging around home so much." But the family budget is likely to be depleted, owing to the purchasing of school clothes and supplies.

*Columbus Day, October 12.*—A dance.

*Football Game.*—The yearly clash of the State University and the State College at Gold attracts many Minevillers and elicits the interest of many who remain at home.

*Hallowe'en, October 31.*—Candles and soap are rubbed on windows of homes and places of business, gates are taken off, and clothes lines are cut. But there is much less mischief than prior to the war when men played many tricks such as placing a wagon on top of a shed, etc.

*Armistice Day, November 11.*—Armistice Day is a holiday of Main Street. Schools are closed. Places of business are expected to stand their large flags in the slots which are on the edge of the cement sidewalk for that purpose. The American Legion stages a dance.



*Payment of Taxes.*—Expectantly the taxpayers await the arrival of a little note from the courthouse which informs them of the tax which they are to pay the county treasurer.

*Thanksgiving Day.*—Stores are closed but miners must work or not, as their employers decree. Schools are closed. Thanksgiving programs occur previously in schools, and other organizations. Some places of business may decorate. A dance is held in the evening.

*Christmas Day, December 25.*—The day begins with midnight mass at the Catholic church, the children having previously spoken "pieces" on church programs, after which they have also received candy and nuts from Santa Claus. There is a community Christmas tree on Main Street sponsored by the Woman's Club at which candy and nuts are given to children. Miners as well as business men do not work on Christmas and sometimes, but not ordinarily, they do not again report to work until after New Year's. Native sons who are attending college return home for Christmas and feel very important. There is much drinking. A dance is had on Christmas Eve, and very likely on Christmas night as well.

There are, of course, many other annual events which are not so much affairs of the major portion of the community. Among these are birthdays, wedding anniversaries, election of aldermen, "Serbian Christmas," banquets of fraternal orders, initiation of officers in fraternal orders, selection of new officers in the Rotary Club and other organizations, balancing books at the end of the fiscal year, and many occurrences of lesser import. Still other events which are annual we may consider as seasonal because they are dependent upon or intimately associated with the seasons—winter, spring, summer, autumn.

*Winter.*—Winter is the period of unemployment, owing to the low demand for manganese ore and to severely cold weather which makes work out of doors expensive and inefficient. Cold weather and snow also curtail automobiling for pleasure, and the people compensate by attendance at the theater, which they often fill to capacity (over five hun-



dred) in contrast to almost deserting it during the summer. However, the weather is sometimes so cold that Main Street is almost abandoned for several days at a time.

When the snow makes Geraldton hill impassable the bus must discontinue its trips to and from Smelters. Occasionally the road is open throughout the year, but as a rule it is closed for several weeks. And it is only during this period that Mineville has the privilege of a Sunday train, and, as a result, Sunday mail.

Sleigh-riding was the predominant winter sport before the advent of the automobile. But coasting down Mineville's many steep hills, and especially down those leading to Main Street, can no longer be done freely, owing to the danger of colliding with an automobile. Skating is still indulged in to a limited extent but basketball is the main sport.

*Spring.*—The coming of spring, as per the calendar, does not denote a radical modification in the weather of Mineville. The most severely cold weather is past at that date, but intermittent snow and chilly weather may be counted upon to predominate until May 1 and sometimes until past the beginning of June. Here and there a day of bright sunshine appears, and toward the end of the season, as these become more numerous, there is a cessation of cold-weather activities and a beginning of those of summer. Consequently, from the point of view of weather's effect upon social activities, spring is mainly a transition period in Mineville. To be sure, the women do their spring house-cleaning, high-school boys try desperately to indulge in track and field sports amid an ever changing climate, while the "fair sex" makes a heroic attempt to adapt spring clothing to the same climate and small boys play marbles—often in the snow—but, it is the transition characteristic which stands out.

*Summer.*—A short period of beauty and warmth causes many distinct changes in the social life of Mineville. Most fraternal and other organizations regularly suspend meetings until autumn. The Catholic priest does not attempt to maintain a Sunday school; there are no church dinners; shows are poorly attended; and a favorite indoor sport of the women, bridge, is usually abandoned. Swimming, fishing, golfing, and motoring become important. The annual Sunday-school picnics of the four churches are held as are those of fraternal organizations. And Main Street is the scene of a well-attended band concert in the course of one evening in each fortnight.

Moreover, Mineville is prosperous in summer. Its male population is 20 per cent larger than during the low period in January. This increase is mainly of unmarried laborers who spend their earnings freely. Foremost among the factors making for population increase is the strong demand for manganese ore. Then there is the attempt of employers to do construction and other work under favorable weather conditions, not to mention harvesting and prospecting which also account for many seasonal workers. And, finally, the sapphire mines, which can only be operated while snow water is plentiful, are under exploitation.

*Autumn.*—With the summer past, the many organizations in Mineville are again in full swing, and men commence to polish their guns for the hunting season. Men are likely to be absent from meetings and from work because they are "out hunting" for a week or two. Hunting stories become a habit among them, and news of the killing of a deer or elk circulates very rapidly. The women rarely hunt, however. Most of them are interested in the results of a hunting trip rather than in the hunting itself. They may be

fascinated while some member of the family tells "how he got his deer," but when an outsider has been successful they are disposed to be indifferent or to make the very practical query, "I wonder if he is going to give us a piece of meat." It is interesting that occasionally a deer is killed less than a mile from town.

In the sphere of organized sports football displaces baseball as a topic of conversation, with the close of the World's Series, and it seems to elicit the greater interest. Indeed, baseball may be the "national game" but it is almost entirely a newspaper sport in Mineville; whereas the local high school stages football games, a large delegation of townsfolk goes to Gold for the "big game" of the state, and radio football fans are numerous and enthusiastic.

Listening to the radio is a seasonal preoccupation which is at its height during the autumn and winter. Enforced indoor life in cold weather and an abundance of "static" during spring and summer are perhaps the main causes.

#### THE MONTHLY ROUND OF EVENTS

Strangers to small-town life who visit in Mineville, often expect to see the drama of the town at once. If they stay but a short time they are likely to say, "I would hate to live here. There is nothing to do." Such people have not discovered that, internally, the town is bubbling over with life. They do not know that unless one is himself an actor in the drama he is not prepared to be aware of much of its existence. In fact, persons who attempt to participate in the social life of Mineville in a thoroughgoing way—and they are many—do not complain that they have "nothing to do," because their time is generally contracted for in advance. A widespread comment in the community is:

There are too many meetings and other things to take a fellow's time in this town. If a fellow attended all the doings that people want him to attend he would never have any spare time. There is something doing every day in the week and every week in the month.

And, excepting the summer season, this wail is well-nigh justified, as can be seen in Table VI, which includes some of the regular "doings" of a Mineville month while excluding even more numerous leisure-time activities which are of irregular and unpredetermined nature.

TABLE VI

Day of Month	Day of Week	Meetings	Usual Number Present	Other Activities
1 . . . . .	Mon.	County Commissioners City Council Band Practice Woman's Benefit Assoc. Altar Society Rainbow Girls	3 7 21 12 15 9	Pay day; "bills" sent by business houses; movies
2 . . . . .	Tues.	County Commissioners High School Board Woodcraft Rotary Firemen A.Y.I.I. Boy Scouts	3 7 20 16 18 18 15	Movies
3 . . . . .	Wed.	Redmen Eastern Star King's Daughters	25 25 18	Movies
4 . . . . .	Thurs.	Grade-School Board Ladies' Aid Band Practice	5 16 21	Movies
5 . . . . .	Fri.	Royal Arch Masons St. Mary's Guild	15 9	Weekly paper; weekly dance; movies
6 . . . . .	Sat.	Deep Thinkers' Club Sons of Herman Alpine Rose Woman's Club	10 8 9 12	Farmers come to town; movies

TABLE VI—*Continued*

Day of Month	Day of Week	Meetings	Usual Number Present	Other Activities
7 . . . . .	Sun.	Epworth League Christian Endeavor	6 7	Church; Sunday school; movies
8 . . . . .	Mon.	Pythian Sisters Band Practice	14 21	Movies
9 . . . . .	Tues.	Knights of Pythias Rotary Boy Scouts American Legion Aux. Past Guardian's Club	20 16 15 22 12	Movies
10 . . . . .	Wed.	Pocahontas Blue Lodge Masons Teachers' Club	35 30 22	Movies
11 . . . . .	Thurs.	Rebeccas Band Practice Priscillas	5 21 18	Movies
12 . . . . .	Fri.	.....	.....	Weekly paper; weekly dance; movies
13 . . . . .	Sat.	Married Folks' Bridge R.E. Bridge Club American Legion	12 15 15	Farmers come to town; movies
14 . . . . .	Sun.	Epworth League Christian Endeavor	6 7	Church; Sunday school; movies
15 . . . . .	Mon.	Westway Club Band Practice Rainbow Girls	12 21 9	Pay day; movies
16 . . . . .	Tues.	Rotary Boy Scouts Yeomen	16 15 4	Movies
17 . . . . .	Wed.	Redmen Eastern Star	25 25	Movies
18 . . . . .	Thurs.	Band Practice	21	Movies
19 . . . . .	Fri.	Royal Arch Masons	15	Weekly paper; weekly dance; movies

TABLE VI—*Continued*

Day of Month	Day of Week	Meetings	Usual Number Present	Other Activities
20.....	Sat.	Woman's Club Deep Thinkers' Club	12 10	Farmers come to town; movies
21.....	Sun.	Epworth League Christian Endeavor	6 7	Church; Sunday school; movies
22.....	Mon.	Rainbow Girls Pythian Sisters Band Practice	9 14 21	Movies
23.....	Tues.	Rotary Knights of Pythias Boy Scouts American Legion Aux.	16 20 15 22	Movies
24.....	Wed.	Pocahontas Blue Lodge Masons	35 30	Movies
25.....	Thurs.	Band Practice Rebeccas Priscillas	21 5 18	Movies
26.....	Fri.	.....	.....	Weekly paper; weekly dance; movies
27.....	Sat.	Married Folks' Bridge R.E. Bridge Club	12 15	Farmers come to town; movies
28.....	Sun	Epworth League Christian Endeavor	6 7	Church; Sunday school; movies
29.....	Mon.	Band Practice Princess Circle	21 12	Movies
30.....	Tues.	Rotary Club Boy Scouts	16 15	Movies
31.....	Wed.	.....	.....	Movies

Such is a skeleton of the monthly and weekly rounds of events in Mineville—a town in which some have said “nothing ever happens.” And yet, we shall have merely suggested



the veritable beehive of social activities that is Mineville when we have added the most important routine of all—the daily round of life.

#### A WOMAN'S DAY

At 6:30 A.M. or earlier the average miner's wife arises, unless she has an indulgent husband who prepares his own breakfast. On the previous evening she may have "made up" his lunch bucket—the thermos case which he will open eagerly with his hard, calloused hands after a half-shift of strenuous toil. As he leaves for a mine in the surrounding mountains she arouses the sleepy children, who should be on their way to school as the "first bell" resounds from the tower of the Mineville Grade School and reverberates not only over the entire town but even to the closer mountains and farms. If she is not too much preoccupied with the round of household duties which are due to keep her busy until her hungry children return at noon for lunch, the peculiar resonance of that bell, which has called two generations of Mineville children to school, may bring back a flood of memories of beautiful spring days when she herself unwillingly heeded its call as did her own small boy that very morning.

At noon the children again respond to the rolling tones from the school belfry and their mother sets about to wash the noonday dishes. Then she tries to "catch up on" a multitude of odds and ends of work so that she may have some time to "clean up" herself and go calling or shopping, or to rest. In case she goes to Main Street she is almost certain to get the mail, as everyone must in Mineville since there is no mailman. But if she is too tired, too busy, or for any other reason does not go downtown, she may telephone her order

to the grocer, and depend upon her husband or children to bring the mail home, as well as some other articles of food which the grocer might deliver too late for supper. Two hours of her time are accounted for in the process of preparing supper, eating, and in disposing of the supper dishes and accompanying tasks. Then she may read, listen to the radio, go to a bridge party, go to a meeting of a fraternal order, attend a picture show, go calling, go motoring, relax, or work. In all, the average workingman's wife in Mineville is no drone. Aside from some local color, perhaps the main difference between the routine in her daily life and that of a city woman of her economic station is that she has not the convenience of gas and must, as she says, "stand over a hot kitchen range on the hottest days" while preparing a meal.

The lot of the professional and business man's wife is little different from that of a miner's wife in most cases. She may have a more beautiful and convenient home but this does not decrease her work. After all, she has a social position the maintenance of which requires the expenditure of much nervous energy which the workman's wife would use in other directions.

#### A MAN'S DAY

The average man in Mineville earns his living in the mines or mills, which ordinarily have from two to three shifts. This changing of shifts every two weeks greatly alters the regularity of his life and comfort. When a man is on day shift he counts himself a fortunate individual; when he is on afternoon shift (4:00 P.M. to midnight) he deplores the fact that the hours for customary leisure-time activities are not his; and when he is on "graveyard shift" (midnight to 8:00 A.M.) he counts the days until he is free to work such hours

as he thinks a man should. But even day shift has its shortcomings, in the case of the miner during the winter when the days are short. For in that season he enters his subterranean workshop before the sun has crept over the mountains to the east and may not see the outside world again until it is dropping out of sight in the west. As one miner put it: "I have gone months at a time without seeing broad daylight."

Unless he has an automobile or has made arrangements to ride with a fellow-worker the miner usually must walk uphill at least a mile before he arrives at the place of his labors. This is a pleasant hike for a sightseer who is interested in the beauties of nature, but it is not welcomed by the worker, especially in winter when the temperature sometimes ranges between "zero" and "40 below zero" for several weeks at a time, and when uphill walking is made difficult by snow. However, in late years a very large part of the men manage to ride, and during the past summer a worker improvised a bus which transports about twenty men to and from work at the Salmon Mine.

Once at the mine, the miner awaits the whistle before being lowered hundreds of feet into the earth or before he commences a long trek into a tunnel. In the mine again, he is curious to see what the other shift, or shifts, have accomplished in advancing the workings, for this determines his own work for the next eight hours. He may "muck" (shovel), run a "buzzy" (air drill), "push car," timber, or do any of the numerous things which the exigencies of a situation require. For in the Mineville district the division of labor, which is so typical of many giant mines, is not pronounced. A man "hires out as a miner," and this means that he must "do what the boss tells him to do"; he must, as he puts it, "use his head" because he may have tasks which never be-

fore faced him. Thus the human automaton of the factory age has not yet become a part of Mineville's life—which fact may explain in part the high level of intelligence which appears to prevail in the local working class.

If a workman has eight hours of sleep he does not have an abundance of leisure time upon his hands. With eight hours of work, three hours consumed in the process of dressing, eating, going to work, bathing after work, coming home, and eating supper, he has but five hours left, some of which may be taken up by incidental duties. If he be working afternoon shift he is very likely to distribute his leisure time indifferently among activities such as "hanging around home," reading, doing chores, and being "sociable" in some Main Street establishment. "Graveyard" shift, the ignominy of which is implied in its name, does not thus deprive a man of ordinary leisure-time pursuits if he sleeps from 9:00 A.M. until late in the afternoon. And day shift, of course, gives ample time for participation in such activities as may suit a man's taste—at a possible expense of sleep.

However, in the natural order of events most of the married workingmen can be depended upon to spend the greater part of their leisure time at home, for they are tired, Main Street offers few attractions, and frequent automobile trips to Gold are prohibitive in terms of time and money. When they "go to town" they tend to seek out the motion-picture show, attend a meeting of a fraternal order, visit with other men on Main Street or in a store, if they do not gamble, drink, or visit in a "moonshine joint" or pool hall. Motoring, fishing, and other activities are indulged in, of course, but not with sufficient frequency to be mentioned as parts of the usual day of a Mineville workingman.

Between the usual day of the business and professional

man and that of the laborer there is more difference than will ordinarily be found between those of their respective wives. Besides marked differences in their workaday lives there are other variations which stand out. For the most part, they do not frequent that haven of the workingman, the "moonshine joint," and they spend very little time on Main Street after business hours. But this is not to say that they do not gamble, drink, and visit, for they indulge in these activities in their homes or in Gold, to which city they motor far more often than the workingman's income will permit. Practically all business and professional men possess radios, whereas only about a third of the day laborers have this inducement for a man to spend his evenings at home.<sup>1</sup>

#### A DAY ON MAIN STREET

While most of the town yet sleeps, the curtain rises upon Main Street at about 5:00 A.M. or earlier, when restaurants commence preparation of breakfast, the chemist begins his work of determining the amount of metals present in ores, and the postmaster stamps mail which has accumulated since the following evening in that lone mail box which stands in front of the post-office—the only mail box in town. At 6:00 A.M. the quietude and darkness are further disturbed as one truck conveys mail to the depot, and another huge one, which is used to haul ore from the Salmon Mine, commences its daily grind; as "Reavley's cab" takes passengers to the train which leaves at the unearthly hour of 6:30 A.M.; and as the chemist's helper goes to the Salmon Mill for samples of ore in a Model-T Ford. Next, if it has not started earlier, the roar of the only locomotive on the Mineville branch line

<sup>1</sup> Some indication of the routine of life for children and youths is given in chaps. xii and xiii.



resounds in seeming defiance to the prevailing stillness. And soon a straggling workman will be seen here and there en-route to work, which he must commence earlier than most of his fellows or which is unusually far from town. Gradually the number of men going to work increases until it reaches its peak between 7:00 and 7:30 A.M.

The miners are well on their way along mountain roads or else are already within the bowels of the earth when the majority of the business and professional men appear on the street between 7:45 and 9:00. Because of the short distances from most of the homes to Main Street these white-collared men of Mineville do not go to work in their automobiles and have no need for a street car, were such to be had. Somewhat to the amusement of fellow-townsmen, even those who are notoriously idle rush toward their establishments in a most hurried walk as if an overwhelming amount of business awaits their arrival.

As the whistles blow at 8:00 A.M., announcing that labor for the day is formally started, the bus leaves on its first trip to Smelters. At about the same time some of the more devoted Catholics are hurrying to church and first-comers among the school children are to be seen on their way to school. Then, shortly, school children dominate the stage—8:30 A.M. finding Main Street agog with young humanity varying from kindergarten age to that of Seniors in high school. As the seasoned Mineviller watches that procession he sees a drama in real life, for his memory places many of the parents of these very children in the same childhood rôles in days long past.

Soon the main body of the children has passed and a few breathless youngsters will be seen in a great hurry to avoid being late for school. Thereafter no outstanding event oc-



curs until the bus arrives from Smelters at 11:00 A.M. with the daily newspapers from Gold. "Is Julius [the bus driver] here yet?" is an interrogation heard upon every hand as that hour approaches.

Even though comparatively few women shop in the forenoon, the merchants are busy since they must prepare for the afternoon rush period. Thus they have sufficient cause to be hungry when they join the school children in making Main Street again a lively place as they go home for lunch. The caricatured country-store merchant who has plenty of time to sit around a stove and tell yarns is not the usual thing on Main Street. With few exceptions, the business men are busy throughout the day in thoroughly modern small establishments, and they rush home or to a restaurant for a "bite to eat" at noon just as do their city brothers.

During the bustling of the noon hour a most characteristic question on every hand is "Is the train in yet?" For although the train is due at noon, it is notoriously variable in the time of actual arrival. Accordingly, answers to the question typically vary from "Sure, I heard the whistle a minute ago," to "You might as well go home. They say it will be three hours late because a train from the east has been snow-bound."

After the train has arrived, the next major interest is expressed in the query: "Is the mail distributed yet?" And, from this time until 6:00 P.M. the post-office is the busiest place in town. Many make several trips through its doors in quest of a much-desired letter, paper, or parcel during the two and one-half hours that are required to distribute the mail into the lock boxes. In fact, getting the mail seems to be a favorite afternoon sport of the people.

Other very busy places in the course of this busiest time

of the day (2:30-6:00) are the meat market and two groceries. The meat market, being the only one in an area which includes two thousand people, would naturally be expected to do a thriving business. Then two of four groceries do about 80 per cent of the grocery business in the same area. Each of these provides work for five men, and so concentration of people thereabouts would be expected despite the large amount of shopping by telephone.

Within the period mentioned (2:30-6:00) the peak of activity for the day is reached between 4:00 and 5:00 P.M., when the confluence of children coming from the schools and men going to and from work is added to the shopping and mail-getting group already present. Thereafter the people gravitate toward their homes or toward restaurants until a distinct lull is reached between 6:15 and 6:45 P.M. But this lull soon disappears when all at once Main Street becomes a leisure-time resort—principally for a part of the male population. Women and girls are to be seen but most of them do not tarry upon the streets. They tend to go directly to the theater, the ice-cream parlor, or a restaurant, or to ride through in an automobile.

At this time the main directions of movement are likely to be toward the 7:00 P.M. picture show, toward the bus which brings a Gold evening paper at 7:15, and toward "moonshine joints" or pool halls. Of these, the "moonshine joint" and pool hall stand pre-eminent in appeal. For of the scores of men, young and old, who stand or sit along the sidewalks of Main Street during a pleasant evening, most will be found congregated in front of these establishments. And during inclement weather and darkness there are no other refuges for the great majority of males who are away from their homes seeking diversion which must last through-

out the evening. To be sure, band practice may be in progress at the courthouse, there may be a meeting of Masons, the City Council may be in session, and a few men will be found in the three tailor shops which function as gossiping centers, but altogether not more than fifty men are likely to be accounted for in this way, and many of these are not habitual frequenters of Main Street.

Mention of habitual frequenters of Main Street suggests, what is true, that there is what may roughly be termed a "Main Street group." This group may be thought of as being exclusive of another which is also identified with Main Street—the business men. It includes those men who spend the major part of their leisure time "down town." Here, along with a predominance of workers, we find Mineville's "leisure class"; here are men who do not wish to work, who cannot work because of old age or sickness, or who work during the short summer and rest all winter—and gamblers. Such persons are fixtures, and if a resident wishes to find one of them his first thought is not of the man's home but rather whether or not the person has been seen on Main Street.

Of the Main Street frequenters, the younger men prefer the pool halls while the older men choose the "moon dumps" when seeking relief from small-town boredom. But, of course, the young man is often drawn to the "moon joint" when in search of liquor. Then he also gravitates toward them at times because the largest and most exciting gambling games are conducted in such places. In fact, day in and day out the "moonshine joint" is the most lively place on Main Street after the crowd has emerged from the first show at the theater at 9:00 P.M. and the more conservative folk have gone home.

"Night life" in Mineville is very tame for those adults

who do not gamble or drink. Among the mature residents, perhaps more sleep is lost in attending meetings of fraternal orders and in listening to the radio than in any other ways. As for youths, the monotony of their night life is broken by the weekly dances which are held either in Mineville or in neighboring hamlets. Since it is almost traditional to stay until the dance is over, these affairs keep them from their homes until early morning hours.

The day formally ends in Mineville when the policeman or the sheriff walks his beat between midnight and 2:00 A.M. and characteristically detects nothing irregular.

PART II  
AGENCIES OF SOCIAL CONTROL





## CHAPTER VI

### HOW WELL THE PEOPLE KNOW ONE ANOTHER

#### INTIMACY

The most unique element in the social life of a stable and spatially isolated small community is the prominent part played by intimate personal relations. In common parlance this trait is recognized in the phrase, "Everyone knows everything about everyone else in a small town." In Mineville, the most common expression for the same general idea is, "The whole town knows your business better than you do yourself." But neither of these statements is supposed to be taken literally, the last usually being made under stress of emotion. They are merely meant to indicate the tendency of small-town residents to know a great deal about one another's private affairs—frequently more than is pleasant for small-townners themselves to contemplate.

The Mineville resident knows well that a very minute part of the total private life of the inhabitants becomes a matter of public knowledge. But by way of gossip he continually discovers odds and ends of the private lives of others which he would not want known of himself. And surprising bits of information about his own private affairs "get back" to him—often much distorted—when he had no intimation that they were in circulation. The net result is that he rebels vigorously. He is likely to assume that the information about him attained complete circulation in the community, when, as a matter of fact, only the "most lively"

news has that honor. Indeed, if each of the fifteen hundred people spent half of his time listening to talk about the other fellow, he would have time to hear but a very small part of the gossip that is "going around."

What is painful to the understanding and sensitive resident is that he never knows to just what extent news about him has attained circulation. He is certain that information of a few striking and sensational aspects of his private life is in circulation, but he does not know whether it is confined to a few friends or has spread to children, old maids, clergymen, or what not. In other words, he never knows just how well he is known by other people in town.

Even when the Mineviller has but the most scant information about a fellow-townsmen he reacts toward him on a personal basis. The few personal details which he may have of the person concerned he assumes to be typical, and these seriously affect his reactions toward that person. However, if he becomes especially interested in such a person he does not long remain ignorant of him, for he knows the network of kinship, friendship, business, and other associational ties of the community sufficiently well that he knows to whom to go for further detail.

Intentionally and unwittingly, Minevillers find themselves accumulating a vast fund of information about one another. Many fellow-townsfolk they know very well and many they know poorly, but their general tendency is to discover as much about each resident as the limitations of time, convenience, and social consequences will permit. Interest of the whole community, of course, is concentrated upon the locally famous or notorious, but each resident is studied intensively by relatives, neighbors, intimate friends, enemies, or others who for any reason become especially interested

in him, and he is investigated to varying degrees of minuteness by the rest of the populace. These many persons come into contact with him in a wide variety of situations since most of the things he does are done within the limits of Mineville. Some know him intimately as a dutiful husband and father, others as a fellow-workman, a fellow-Mason, a fellow-Rotarian, a faithful church worker, a boyhood chum, a tricky gambler, a reliable friend, a poor loser at golf, a disagreeable person with whom to go fishing, etc. And the people who know him in all of these diverse rôles tend to know one another well and to tell each other what they have observed about him. Thus it is unlikely that he can live long as an active person in the community without revealing the bulk of the salient points of his character to the people at large. Indeed, those persons who have lived in the community for several years, without intentionally revealing much by word of mouth about themselves, would be most surprised were they to realize the extent to which a multitude of incidental details regarding them have been brought together by the people. There have even been cases of persons who have become much more thoroughly known than would have been the case had they not tried so obviously to guard their privacies, for in doing so they made themselves mysterious, and thus stimulated the curiosity of the people so that more than ordinary attention was given to discovering something about them.

As a result of this absorbing interest which the people tend to take in persons and other things in their town, they become walking chronicles of past and present happenings in its life. While each resident does not know everything about every other resident or about everything in town, the sum total of the people tend to know a great deal about any resi-

dent, and about anything which plays a vital part in the community. To attack that collective memory through the most fruitful persons is an object of any well-guided research into a small town.

In one of its more harmless aspects the efficient collective memory of the people works a "hardship" upon the women. For unless a woman is relatively a newcomer, her age is bound to be known very accurately. If she once attended school in the community, her classmates or those within a few years of her age know her age to the year and are not at all loath to pounce upon her if she should decide to forget a year or so. On the other hand, if she is a woman who has been in the community only a few years, she has from time to time given different persons indices which, when considered together, tell her age in spite of her efforts at concealment. Perhaps, in a moment of casual explanation she mentioned that a *younger* brother lived in New York, then, perhaps, quite as casually to another person several years later, she may have mentioned that he was twenty years of age when he worked at the World's Fair in Chicago in 1893. If her listeners were women in both cases, she may be relatively certain that she has told the public her age.

He who would indulge in pretense in Mineville must be very cautious lest he be wasting his time or be making himself a target for scorn, ridicule, or amusement. To be sure, a certain amount of bluffing can be done since, after all, persons have some privacy, even in Mineville. But this bluffing must not be of a sort that easily can be uncovered, for the people have little patience with pretenders. Persons long in the community know that there is scant use for them to "put on front" of the more obvious sort such as by the wearing of fine clothes or the purchasing of a costly auto-

mobile. Men without automobiles and who rarely "dress up" occupy positions of highest community esteem alongside of others who make every external appearance of prosperity and sophistication. And by a ferreting-out process the people soon discover whether or not a newcomer "has anything to be stuck up about."

One must be "common" in Mineville. That is, while there are countless ways in which people are rated as "not as good as" or "better than" one another in the social hierarchy, everyone is expected to be democratic. Those who appear to "think they are better than anyone else" are not well liked and need not expect favors from their townsfolk such as election to political office. As a result, the most haughty newcomers succumb to public pressure and in time, at least, pretend to be democratic. But whether they become democratic or not, they soon find themselves genuinely concerned about the affairs of the most humble resident. For the human-interest appeal is strong, and the small town is not so large that it is not intensely human. The persons met by one long in residence stand out as persons with definite life-histories which are so intertwined with his own that when he thinks of his own past he thinks of it largely in terms of relations had with these persons.

The intimate association of Mineville people with one another has much to do with making them a more uniform cultural group than that made up by the people of a large city. Despite some tendency toward cliques, the small number of persons of particular types forces the intermingling of persons of dissimilar intellectual attainments, artistic cultivations, and cultural backgrounds in more or less intimate relationships. Because the people cannot segregate so definitely according to specialized types as in a city, the develop-



ment of exaggerated types is not fostered. Indeed, there seems to be a certain leveling process in Mineville with the upper classes having a great deal of direct influence on the lower. Even when residents, as they say, "never have anything to do with one another" they are likely to follow each other's activities in a general way by means of observation and gossip.

Perhaps it is because the people realize that they know a great deal more about one another than their direct associations would testify that they often demand an external appearance of intimacy to the point of pretense. Greetings with an air of formality are disdainfully received even by the upper social strata of the town, for the most part. People are expected to act as if they know one another. The desire to be called by first names is a good index of this trait. There are, however, those who hold that extensive use of first names is inappropriate. Witness the following statement by a woman in her early thirties:

Ethel Parks [married, age thirty-seven] and Margaret Walkins [married, age forty-seven] called me down at a party, a few years ago, for not addressing them as Ethel and Margaret. "You have known me all your life and you call me Mrs. Walkins," said Margaret. But I don't care whether they like it or not I'm going to address them as "Mrs." I told both of them that I had not been intimate with them even if I had lived all of my life in the town. I don't like the way that bunch say "Jo," "Margaret," "Lil," and "Bea" and expect others to address them the same way.

I don't know but I suppose they think they are up-to-date when they call each other by first names. I don't like it. I think older people have some respect coming. They call Mrs. Jones "Elsie" [age about sixty-eight]. I don't think it is right for young people to address older ones so intimately. I won't do it, that's all.

That bunch doesn't think much of me and I don't see why they should.



It will be noted that even this rebellious spirit lapsed into the community habit of speaking of women by their first names despite the fact that she refused to address them thus in person.

Besides the extensive practice of addressing people by their first names, another index of intimacy in the community is the necessity of "speaking to people." "He doesn't speak to me; he won't get my vote," is a frequent remark passed regarding candidates for county offices. This is not to say that everyone speaks to everyone else but merely that the people like to feel that they have the refusal of the other fellow's greeting, especially that of public servants.

The Mineville public servant must be very resourceful in order to cultivate and maintain the required personal relationship with his public. For instance, whether or not a business man (or any help he may hire) is cordial to everyone, is a Catholic, a Protestant, a Mason, a supporter of a certain candidate in an election, an advocate of certain policies on the school board, etc., materially affects his trade. And it is of no small importance that the people not only like him and his clerks and delivery men but his wife and relatives as well. So necessary is the required personal relationship that he and his family must deliberately try to cultivate pleasant, if not intimate, relationships with everyone and tactfully avoid any relations which might cause personal differences. It is due to this need to understand their customers as persons that the business men become among the most thorough students of the life of the town. For they must know a great deal about the private affairs and the whims of the people in order to know what is likely to please and what will probably offend.

Exaggerated local pride in the abilities of townsfolk does

not occur often in Mineville. The people compare local talent of all kinds with the best in the land and, of course, it is usually found wanting. In respect to Mineville professional men, in particular, the general tendency may be to underrate rather than to overrate. There are conspicuous cases in which most residents seem grudgingly to concede the ability of a local practitioner merely because they know him too well. To some of the people almost any professional man in a larger neighboring city is an expert, while at best those at home are considered to be mediocre. "In this town," said an old-time resident, "we know people too well to worship them."

Entirely apart from the quality of professional services to be had out of town, they are often sought because people do not want the local practitioner to learn certain details of their private affairs. Back of this, however, is also a fear that "the whole town will find out." As a Mineviller said: "Tell him any of your business on a professional basis and he will tell his wife and his wife will advertise it to the whole town."

Out of the reaction against the intimacy of the community there grows an urge to escape from local-community controls. This escape takes many forms, from a fishing or motoring trip to a vacation in California, or leave-taking and establishment of permanent residence in a large city.

A clergyman, who, because of the high visibility lent by his position, is an especial object of community scrutiny, said:

I've got to leave town for a few days every two weeks, for if I don't I almost go crazy. Between times I try to go fishing and the like—just anything to get out of town. Why, they'll soon want to know whether or not I wear garters, and if so, what kind!

I call upon my parishioners only as a matter of duty, as a rule, and I make my calls short. You see, being human I would enjoy some of them more than I would others and would naturally visit longer with the ones I would enjoy. In other words, I would make friends and that wouldn't do. I mustn't show partiality for persons; I must like one as much as another or I will hurt someone's feelings. In other words, they won't let me be human in this town, and so, I live in hopes that it won't be too many years before I have a church in a large city again.

No persons appear to be more in need of an escape from Mineville than persons of unusual attainment along professional or artistic lines who are not satisfied with being "big frogs in a small pool." Unless such persons are engaged in mining they feel marooned and make frequent trips to the outside world for appreciation or in order to be among their "equals," if not merely to escape what is to them the deadening effect of a small town. They become sorely irritated at the excessive bearing of personal issues in the town and long for the time when they can leave. They tend to fail to observe that it is the natural shortcomings of a small-scale milieu, and not those of the individuals in that milieu, to which they object. For so small a group cannot provide an appreciative audience for every sort of talent, and in the intimacy of the community a feeling of familiarity seems to breed contempt more often than admiration for the other fellow. If such persons were more objective they would note that their own contempt for many worthy residents is a function of this same intimacy.

Yet with all the objections to Mineville's inherent limitations, a statistical study of residence shows that the main body of the population has remained of fairly constant personnel throughout the years.<sup>1</sup> Aside from some inertia and

<sup>1</sup> See p. 32.

the economic bonds which most of the people plead in explaining their failure to leave, why do they stay? What are the values which cause so many departees to return when at their leave-taking they had said "goodbye forever" to Mineville's "small-town stuff"? What has caused the growth of the community saying: "They always come back, sooner or later, if only for a visit. When they leave they swear they never want to see the town again, but they can't stay away from the old town for good"?

The answer to these questions is: *Intimacy*. For the very closeness of social relationship, and the lack of variety in persons and other objects of attention, which have so many distasteful consequences, are the bases of the profoundest values of small-town life. This is because the formation of deeply rooted sentiments is dependent upon identification with the same objects over a long period of time, and the small town not only encourages but enforces such long-continued identification. In spite of themselves, Minevillers find themselves developing and holding fond sentiments for the little town they are so prone to abuse. The town takes on somewhat the function of a large family group; it becomes so intimately bound up with the resident's life that for him to reject it is for him to disown a large part of himself. The vast and fast-changing environment of a city does not readily foster such intimacy of response, and even another small town does not offer the seasoned Mineviller an adequate substitute. He has grown to demand an intimate community and a particular one—Mineville.

#### ISOLATION

No matter how intimate the social relationships of a small town may be, each resident is to some extent isolated from

every other resident and from the community as a whole. He makes a definite attempt to lead some sort of private life, that is, to restrict knowledge of certain parts of his life to a selected few persons if not to keep it from everyone. And there are also many other factors which isolate him more or less. In Mineville, isolation may profitably be considered from two points of view: (1) isolation of the person from the town and (2) isolation of the town from the person. Individual differences in both of these respects are very great. Some persons know a great deal about the town while the town knows little of them; and, conversely, the town is keenly conscious of some residents who have little concern with it.

Considering the availability of information about people and events in the community, the number of persons encountered who know little of what is going on is surprisingly large. In this class are some of the most prominent and well-known people in town. Their failures to participate thoroughly in the rich inner life of the town is usually due to pressure of workaday activities and to aloofness. It should not be overlooked, however, that some of these leaders, with their hands upon the throttles of the community, occupy peculiar points of vantage for thoroughgoing participation along certain lines not open to the rank and file.

One leading citizen refuses on principle to "talk about people," and others incur his displeasure when they do so. Naturally, he appears to be isolated. His wife, on the other hand, is isolated from direct intimate contact with many people because of a feeling of superiority, but she is quite well versed in the doings of other persons because she gossips with those in her own set who have access to the outer world. Perhaps she secretly serves as her husband's source



of contact although she claims that he "shuts her up" whenever she mentions "personalities."

Every resident has group and personal ties which give him access to certain currents of the life of the town and isolate him from others. This fact applies as well to those currents which carry the community's appraisal of him as to those carrying news extraneous to his own affairs. Indeed, he may be forever isolated from information of public opinion which is very vital to his welfare or he may wait months or years until it comes to him. The experiences of a youthful clergyman, newly arrived in Mineville, illustrate this point. He had recently been graduated from a theological seminary in which dancing was a regular social function. Without supposing that he would be frowned upon, he set out to dance in Mineville. Months rolled by before he discovered the stir of tongues which his act had caused and then he did not receive the information from a Mineviller but rather from his superior at headquarters.

The town was agog with gossip about him, yet he only vaguely knew it from hints which people gave him. A stranger, he danced with those who looked respectable and had the misfortune of selecting for a dance one of the most disapproved-of women in town. Then to cause tongues to wag the faster, he was said to have been seen talking to her in an alley. His isolation is shown in the fact that months later, when informed of the extent to which this and a number of his harmless acts had been in the focus of public attention, he made the following remarks:

So I am supposed to have been seen talking to her in an alley? I think that is a lie. I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to preach next Sunday about how Christ mingled with the lowly and sinful. I'll just do that—you see.



The truth is that I had only danced about eight times before I came to town and had no idea it made so much difference what partner I chose.

I heard about my going into pool halls at the time, only it got around that I was gambling.

All I can say is that I would most likely not be here now if I had known there was so much talk going on about me. I really think I would have left even though it would have been against my best principles because I had other reasons for being disturbed at that time.

Thank goodness, it is all over now.

I want you to tell me about people here because, being a minister, I may be kept from certain facts.

But within six months his access to the inner life of the town was greatly increased. He had joined the Rotary Club and the band, and had taken up the direction of the local Boy Scouts. His pastoral calls had placed him in contact with leading gossipers on a large scale; and his marriage had broken down certain inhibitions married persons might have had in his presence, besides having given him the advantage of a special dispatcher of gossip in the person of his wife.

Not only clergymen but others in Mineville tend to be isolated because of their moral ideals. Such persons are likely to be kept ignorant of the tremendous rôle of sex in the town, merely because others do not feel free to discuss these matters with them from fear of being thought "dirty minded." It is this ignorance owing to isolation which causes some people in Mineville to condemn much of the gossip about the conduct of the town's flappers as outrageously unjust.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> An investigator of a small town must take great care that he does not thus isolate himself from phases of the life of the town. He must be adept at keeping in touch with certain persons who normally are actual participants in or else have ready access to such details. A diversified corps of unwitting lieutenants is his greatest asset.

To Minevillers a most interesting case of isolation is that of Sarah Dyer. Sarah is single, about forty-five years of age, and a hometown girl. Her tendency to be a recluse is a frequent topic of conversation in the better circles of the town. She limits her direct social contacts almost entirely to members of her own family, a niece doing her shopping regularly every afternoon. Sometimes no one in the family next door sees her for weeks at a time, and when she is aware that she is being observed during a momentary stay on her back porch, she quickly disappears within.

Only conjectures are available to explain Sarah's reasons for isolating herself and none of them is satisfactory. And to make her case more peculiar to an outsider, she takes an interest in, and has a more than usual supply of stylish clothes, the latest of household appliances, and many of the pretty things which most women seem to covet in order to exhibit them to other women.

Sarah is said to be very sociable. So, with the aid of her relatives, she is probably isolated physically, but knows quite well what is going on in the town.

*The case of Johnnie Gulliver.*—Johnnie Gulliver is an octogenarian old-timer who lives alone in one of the few cabins which remain from the Mineville of the sixties. Although he lives a block from the busy part of Main Street, he is strikingly isolated from the life of the town. His is an isolation due principally to infirmities of old age. These make the trip to town an arduous task and cause him to be unsociable when he goes to town, for he feels that they brand him as a man who has conspicuously outlived his usefulness. Forty years ago he was a prosperous business man in Crystal. Friends who knew him during his heyday are thoughtful when he is in dire need but they visit little with him.

Like so many old-timers, Gulliver's isolation stands in strong contrast to the intimacy he once had with the community.<sup>1</sup>

*The case of Duncan.*—Mr. Duncan (age eighty-two) came to Mineville in 1875. A mining engineer with a degree from an eastern university, he was one of the most prominent men in the "camp" during the first thirty years of his residence. Alderman, mayor, county surveyor, mine superintendent, mine-owner, boxer, fencer, and owner of thoroughbred horses, imported dogs, and gamecocks, he has always been a unique figure in the town. An educated man with a college degree, and an unusual family tree, it is no wonder that he felt himself to be superior to the ordinary pioneer in the early days. This was one of the factors in his isolation. The other and most important factor is a mental complex which still predisposes him to believe that people are against him. "Everybody always did seem to be against me," he says.

Out of these dispositions grew a tendency to be suspicious of the good intentions of other people and to be charitable to very few. As a result he acquired a reputation for meanness and was disliked and avoided. He complained:

No one seems to care anything about me. Here I live all alone with not over one visitor in from two to six months. I don't have more than two people a year who come here and want to visit with me. I guess people think I am peculiar because I am alone and say what I think no matter what the consequences.

In another interview he said:

Yes, I notice that being alone affects me. I go to see no one and no one comes to see me. I made up my mind that it was largely my fault and tried to mingle by going to a card party where there was also supposed to be dancing. But they did not dance and when I insisted that I couldn't play cards they told me to take my money and get out.

<sup>1</sup> Johnnie died in April, 1930.

Nick Rio's blacksmith shop is the only place in town where people are sociable with me.

No, I practically never joined any organizations. Right now I don't consider that any organization in town would have me. But, I don't care much because I don't approve of most of them anyway.

I did consider joining the Rotary Club and went so far as to ask Howard Farwell about it. He just said, "I'll see." I guess he didn't want to make me mad by telling me that they wouldn't have me.

Duncan's mother, who lived in Mineville with him from 1889 until her death in 1912, shared his isolation. Small children knew that people did not visit with the Duncans and felt that there was something strange and forbidding about them. Mrs. Duncan was a very old lady, they knew, because she was the mother of a man who was old, but few had ever seen her in her latter days excepting from a distance. It now appears that she was isolated because of her having had a disposition similar to that of her son. The following statement suggests that he may even have patterned after her as a child:

No, nobody visited mother—why, I don't know. Somehow we weren't the same kind of people as others are, I guess. One time Mrs. Lob was trying to be nice to mother when she said, "I just must be up to see you some time, Mrs. Duncan." But mother knew that she was trying to be nice and so she said, "Oh, you needn't bother."

Mother and I felt the same way about things.

An old-timer whose residence dates back a half-century and who seems to like Duncan said:

I talk to him often. My goodness, but he was a mean man when he was young! I can't tell you how mean he was because he was so terribly mean. He wouldn't even let a person walk on the Luck Company's ground. I don't think he had a friend in town because he was so mean.

He is very well educated you know—and smart too—but, my goodness, he was mean! Nobody could get along with him.

Mr. Duncan comes to Main Street often, but this is a poor measure of his isolation for he habitually feels that there is a great social distance between him and his fellows—and there is. Then, to make matters worse for him, he is growing deaf and feels that he has no right to irritate people by requesting that they repeat their remarks.

*The case of Frank Gardner.*—Frank Gardner was a resident whom few thought isolated because he was a public figure with a wide range of acquaintances as a by-product of a lifetime in the county and three successful campaigns for the office of county clerk and recorder. Yet, in his own mind, he was wretchedly isolated.

Frank was encountered for interviews but a very few days after he had been defeated for re-election. A hairbreadth victory in the previous election had made him feel unappreciated, and defeat in the present instance completed the job of making him feel friendless and alone. He said:

I have never made close friends in this town. I don't know why people haven't taken to me. Mrs. Hogg is really the only close friend I have made in town and I had known her previously.

When I lived on the ranch I had many intimate friends. In fact, nearly all of my friends were intimate ones before I came here.

You might think that I am an intimate sort of fellow who is intimate with most everybody but I'm not. I'm really very reserved. Just to show you how closely I can be associated with people without telling them what I have told you I can point out that I have had my office next door to Arthur Holden's for four years and although we talk a great deal I have never been intimate with him. And there is Ernest Paxton. I have had much to do with him and yet our talk has always been on the surface as far as personal things go. And there is Judge Burfee and George Murdock—I don't know them well enough to confide in them either. No sir! You are the first one in town with whom I have been intimate.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The persons he mentions are fellow-county-officers at the courthouse.



I feel friendless in this town. The sooner I get away from it the better off I'll be. I wouldn't think of asking anyone here to help me to get a job.

Well, you wouldn't advise me to stay here, would you?

There aren't openings here and if there were I probably wouldn't get them. The showing I made in this town in the primaries showed me just what the town thinks of me.

I was all alone in my campaign. I didn't have anyone to come and tell me what was said about me. Right along I am discovering falsehoods which worked against me.

Yes, Ernest was bound to find out everything that was said against him because one of his many relatives was almost sure to hear everything and wise him up so that he could plan his campaign accordingly. But I was all alone and now I find things out when it is too late.

Often when I was bothered about something I went downstairs to Mrs. Hogg and talked it over. Never have I known anyone who was so understanding and so impartial. Among the women who have come into my life she stands next to my wife and mother in her contribution. She would say to me, "Now, Frank, don't fret over such inconsequential things," and in her way she could make me think and feel rightly about my situation. When the community lost her the other day it lost a big soul.

A few months after the expiration of his term of office Frank migrated to California, browbeaten by a conviction that it would be useless for him to expect a white-collar job in Mineville and too proud to accept the rougher manual labor to which he had been accustomed before his election to a county office.

*The case of Burger.*—The isolation of Mr. Burger, unlike that of Mr. Gardner, was voluntary. Mr. Burger was principal of the Mineville Grade School for four years and during that period made no intimate friends in town. His home and his schoolwork took up practically all of his time. He evinced no interest in joining the Rotary Club, which sought him to join its ranks, for he had no interest in superficialities and



thought five dollars per month too expensive. Having been very competent at his profession and a fluent and expressive speaker, he had the respect of the community.

The self-imposed isolation of the Burger family was due to its having felt itself to have been at great cultural divergence with the rest of the community and to Burger's overwhelming desire to save money for further education. They were isolated Seventh Day Adventists who took their religion very seriously. Burger held religious services each week for his wife and two children and was sincerely sad about the ignorance and lack of interest of most of the townsfolk in the deeper problems of life.

Burger's closest contact with other men outside of his schoolwork was in the Deep Thinkers' Club, which he brought into being six months before his departure for a Seventh Day Adventist college in Washington state. This club was dear to his heart because it symbolized his highest ideal. The club's purpose, as he put it, was "to bring out divergent points of view upon serious problems."

Regarding his isolation Burger said:

We don't mix socially. We stay pretty much to ourselves. But we do enjoy the company of people who use their heads for something else than things to hang their hats on. We would like to get better acquainted with you people before we leave town.

Burger has a feeling that he is, as he often said in the Deep Thinkers' Club, "always a member of minority groups." He seems to have a reluctance to associate with majority groups; he is a champion of the underdog.

*The case of Ralph Stein.*—Ralph Stein, a business man, is in a position to know much of the town and yet his direct personal contacts are not many. When asked to attend the Deep Thinkers' Club he said:

I'd be glad to go to the Deep Thinkers' Club but I wouldn't have anything to say, and, if I did, I couldn't say it. Twelve or thirteen years ago when I was accustomed to mixing with people I could get up and speak at any time but to try now would kill me. I'm so locked up by myself and among my few friends that I am very self-conscious. My work forces me to keep my attention on other things than people.

I know that people think I'm cranky, but I'm not. By the time I have my mind on this work all day I don't feel much like speaking to people along the street—and often I have a job on my mind as I walk along. Then my partner gives me such an unsportsmanlike deal that I often don't feel like speaking to anyone. I sure get out of humor over his treatment. I go home, throw off my coat and hat, and romp with the kids for a while and I'm cured till I get back to the store.

Dr. Pratt said he envied me because of my attitude toward people. He said, "You don't give a damn about anyone. You do your own work and mind your own business and don't let people worry you. I wish I was like that." And I'm that way a lot because I can't afford to be otherwise on my income.

Isolation is a perennial human problem. There are respects in which everyone wishes more isolation than he has (privacy) and there are others in which he wishes less (lonesomeness).

Mistaken identity is another manifestation of isolation. With all the tendency of Minevillers to know something about everyone in town, they sometimes rate a resident of more than ordinary prominence with outrageous inaccuracy. For instance, Rev. Blackwell, who was one of the most intelligent men in the community, was generally considered to be "not all there" or "cracked." He received this rating because of superficial appraisals of him based upon personal eccentricities and mannerisms, and to his having been somewhat a tenderfoot in Mineville folkways. So great was the community's social distance from him that a rumor gained wide circulation to the effect that he was mentally unbal-

anced and had been sent to Mineville to recuperate. External appearances were convincing enough that nearly the whole of his two years of residence had passed before his intelligence was accurately appraised by the main body of the people. Even then there were still many who rated him as "peculiar" or "a little off."

Those Minevillers who are actually unbalanced mentally occupy conspicuous positions, but at the same time they are isolated. They are noticed and talked about a great deal but they are avoided, or, at least, few are intimate with them. Cases which have received much attention of late are those of "Loonie Looie" and "Crazy Alec." Both of these men have received treatment at the State Hospital for the Insane. As soon as the present depression (1931) has passed and they no longer need the economic shelter of relatives, they might do well to leave town. For it is doubtful that Mineville will ever rate them as otherwise than "crazy" even though they never lapse seriously again. Neither is able to secure employment. Only under pressure would most Mineville men work with them.

The "outsider" or stranger is also likely to find himself conspicuous and yet isolated from the bosom of Mineville in some ways. He must be in residence for many months or years before the "old guard" considers him to be a Mineviller. By nothing excepting long participation in the activities of the town do the people grow to accept him as one of them. He is likely to find stubborn discrimination against him in numerous respects—particularly in regard to getting some jobs.

If a newcomer is given honors there is much complaint. Jack Holiday was made an officer in the Crystal County

Angler's Association after a residence of about a year. This was highly resented despite Holiday's superior ability.

Likewise, the newcomer who secures a job when there is unemployment among the "home guard" is resented, and those who employ him are condemned. Newcomers sense this feeling and react against it. One of them, a newly arrived miner from Gold, said:

The home guard thinks no one has a right to earn a living here who has not been here all his life. In my case, they will get over it in time; they will have to because I intend to make my home here. I like this town a lot more right now than some of these kickers who have been living here for forty years.

Conversely, "hometowners" complain that "you have to be a stranger to get any privileges in this town. When they are used to you they don't care about you." And, to be sure, only visiting former residents, departing residents, or out-of-town guests are fêted highly at banquets, etc., as a rule.

Sometimes a newcomer is made to feel temporarily as if the whole town is admitting him with open arms. In not many days or weeks, however, he ceases to be a novelty. His status then becomes determined more on a basis of what he is than upon his mere newness in the community or upon what he at first appeared to be. People no longer make so much fuss over him. He commences to recognize that he is isolated to various degrees from different residents and from the community as a whole. After all, he is a newcomer and he does not know enough about Mineville and Minevillers, past and present, to participate in a great deal of the conversation on equal terms with seasoned residents. He must pass through a seasoning process in which he is continually reminded of his social distance from the town by his need to ask questions about matters which older residents assume

one another knows. He, of course, does not enjoy being forced to exhibit his *naïveté* so often, and at times his isolation from the town is almost bound to cause him downright distress.

But even the native Mineviller sometimes feels as if he stands alone, as if he is not quite admitted into the inner circle of the community he calls home. In the intimacy of a small town, such undesired isolation of a seasoned resident may be very painful. There is an acute feeling of being physically near and socially far from the community. The victim, like Duncan, is likely to construe every gesture as carrying evil portent. Somehow, most of the people he knows so well seem to be banded against him. From long association he knows how they gossip, how ruthless they can be, and yet he cannot discover what is being said so that he may defend himself. A recent candidate experienced this sort of isolation in his campaign for a seat in the state legislature when he tried desperately but in vain to secure convincing evidence as to the reaction of the public toward him. He talked a great deal with people in general for several months, but the frank persons with reliable opinions were too few and far between to make their words convincing until after the votes were counted and the facts were evident. His case illustrates that a Mineviller may be in the center of attention, may visit prodigiously with his town-folk in an effort to keep in touch with the trend of opinion on a particular topic, and yet be isolated from any adequate notion of the common talk of the community on that topic.

An oft-quoted figure of speech is that one can never feel more isolated than when alone in the never ending procession of people on a city street. But this figure does not seem to take into account that those who can hurt us most deeply



are those whom we know best. As keen as our sense of "aloneness" may be on a city street, it is caused by impersonal discrimination which busy and cautious people must make. It has not that peculiar torment of isolation in a small town, that feeling of being so near and yet so far from intimate contact—isolation on a personal basis.

#### THE RANGE OF ACQUAINTANCESHIP IN MINEVILLE

There are no street numbers on homes in Mineville, and few residents know the name of the street on which they live. There is no need for such knowledge because the average resident knows the precise residence of about three-fourths of the families in town and the general part of town of the residences of considerably more. Directions are given in terms of landmarks that a person happens to know, as, for instance, "the third house down from Murphy's." A stranger, of course, often has difficulty in locating a particular house under such conditions.

The average Mineville adult lists about one-fourth of the people in town as his speaking acquaintances. By sight, name, or reputation he is aware of the presence of approximately nine-tenths of the adult persons, and seven-tenths of the children and youth. But individual differences are so great that some residents know practically everyone while others know relatively few. Excepting school-teachers, however, any Mineville adult is likely to be heard to say: "I can't keep track of the kids; they grow and change too fast." For, after all, a town of fifteen hundred is just a bit too large for everyone to "keep track" of everyone else—especially of growing children with whom few dealings are had.

Among seasoned residents, the least acquainted appear to be those who are strongly disposed to concentrate their interest in a few persons; and old folks who live in their memories



of past personalities of the town. A prominent woman whose feeling of superiority had much to do with her lack of interest in most people, said: "I have never felt the way my husband does about people. He likes to know all about every Tom, Dick, and Harry. I'm just the opposite. I like to cultivate a few." A woman of seventy-three years, most of whose friends are dead or departed and who pays comparatively little attention to the present people of Mineville, testified: "My friends are nearly all gone. A person doesn't take interest in the new like he did in the old." But both of these women were found to be very conversant in the lively town gossip despite their small lists of speaking acquaintances and the relatively narrow ranges of persons of which they are aware by sight or reputation.

The most widely acquainted people in Mineville are those who are normally in direct contact with the largest number of persons and part of whose stock-in-trade is to know them: the business and professional men of Main Street and those who have public offices or jobs. For sheer ability to identify people the postmaster stands first. Because all mail is called for at the post-office in Mineville and because nearly all of it is addressed simply "Mineville, ———," he functions as a combined postmaster and mailman who must be aware of everyone by name who receives mail. He must know the names and family relationships of all the inhabitants, even of people he has never seen, so that he can put mail in the proper lockboxes. Sometimes he is puzzled in regard to whom to give a letter addressed to Miss Mary "So-and-So," and patient inquiry reveals that the strange lady who does not call for her mail is a newborn infant. If some mail has perchance accumulated for the infant during the course of a week or so, her parents become indignant that he has not learned of the momentous occasion of her birth earlier and

somehow ascertained her name. Such is a sample of the postmaster's lot in the intimacy of a small town!

The postmaster is the best authority on population changes. He is among the first to know of the presence of a newcomer and among the first to know of departures, since even those who stay but several days usually receive mail, while those who depart leave addresses to which mail is to be forwarded. According to this official, the first one to make extensive use of his wide knowledge of people and their whereabouts was a candidate in a recent political campaign, who wished to send advertisements to voters who were out of town or of whose identity he was not aware by name. The mail officer did not feel at liberty to divulge out-of-town addresses but, as a fellow-citizen rather than as an official, he felt free to discuss the identity of people and whether or not they were in town.

The postmaster's is a superficial knowledge of people. He says he knows very little of what goes on in town because he is too busy with his work. But, if his were an elective office he no doubt would find time to discover a great deal about persons, as do the local politicians who depend more directly upon the good will of the public for their livelihoods.

To illustrate the extent of acquaintanceship in Mineville the case of two recent politicians may be taken. These men perused together a list of the 850-odd names of registered voters in Mineville. One of them, who was making his first bid for office and whose ability to identify people was perhaps average, knew by name slightly over 90 per cent of the voters. The other, a seasoned politician, knew about 95 per cent. These figures are suggestive of the wide range of acquaintanceship in Mineville when it is added that the postmaster identified most of the remaining names as those of transients who had left town. The figures, however, do not

indicate the intimacy of contact had by the seasoned politician with the voters as a whole, which distinguished him from his "green" companion, and they do not include children and others ineligible to vote.

Eventually most residents must call the town physician. Although he may have little to do with them under normal conditions, since he usually encounters them intimately when they are in trouble, he has a rare and perhaps unequaled picture of them. What a picture he has of some people from the time he ushers them into the world until they play the parts of men and women in the community! What stories he could feed into the channels of gossip were he not obliged to maintain professional secrecy!

But none are so intimately in touch with the people as a whole as are the grocery deliverymen and the milkmen who see them in their homes every day or nearly every day. Before the days of the telephone the people depended upon these men to spread much of the gossip. Even today the grocery deliveryman who can have a few interesting bits of news when he calls is an asset to his employer if he is careful not to talk too much. The relatively vivid insight he secures into lives of people is shown in the fact that most of the residents see a woman under somewhat formal conditions, for the most part, whereas he "walks in" regularly when she is in a wrinkled kimono, has her head covered with curlers, is scrubbing a floor on her knees, and has huge holes in her stockings. Because he is in a habit of entering the door without knocking he often embarrasses a family which is in the midst of a somewhat undignified argument or in an uproar as little Billy is being spanked. "But a fellow has to be careful," said a deliveryman. "He can see things and be told things at one house but he doesn't dare to go to the next and tell too much."

## CHAPTER VII

### GOSSIP

One of the favorite themes of novels, stage plays, and jokes has long been the petty gossiping in small towns. Even the small-town residents themselves poke some fun at the inevitable and perennial gossiping in their midst, and are continually crying out against it and grumbling about it. For all that is so traditional about the small and isolated community is woven about the far-reaching power of gossip—of communication by word of mouth.

In Mineville, "gossip" is a term much used, especially by women and in description of them. It has two general meanings. Sometimes it includes all local news which is transmitted by word of mouth; and at other times it means only that information involving a fellow-resident which any particular resident would not want told of himself, or which people feel they must whisper stealthily lest they incur the displeasure of someone. Whether or not the resident wishes the word to carry a derogatory stigma is told by the intonation of his voice or by other gestures. In the following discussion it will be used in both senses under the assumption that the context will indicate to what extent a distinction is meant to be made between mere talk, and that sort of talk which anyone thinks should be whispered or not told.

#### WHO ARE THE GOSSIPERS?

Over the telephone a Mineville woman may quite frankly say, "I thought I would call up and see if you have heard the latest gossip." But while she is herself in the midst of spread-

ing a scandal she is not unlikely to cast discredit upon another woman by calling her a "terrible old gossip." This illustrates the tendency of the people to make light of their own gossiping and that of their friends and to condemn it in others. For whether or not a person is rated as a gossip in the discrediting sense of the term depends not upon what he actually says but upon the attitude toward him held by the person making the rating.

Violent outbursts of anger and disgust at the "damned gossipers" are characteristic of most Minevillers when some of their own private affairs are aired in public. The part they themselves play in airing the affairs of others they seem to overlook. While it is true that most of them pretend to refrain from circulating information which will be harmful to the other fellow, all townsfolk (excepting infants and very small children) are dispensers of gossip, be it harmful or not. Those persons who might locally be known as non-gossipers are merely persons who are comparatively little interested in collecting whispered information and who, when they secure it, impart it more tactfully and considerately than the people as a whole. But even they have a few strong dislikes which cause them to show little consideration for some people.

In classifying the gossiping proclivities of the people the first criterion to suggest itself is that of sex, because from time immemorial men have jested about woman's tendency toward personal gossip. The explanation is clear. She merely talks of that about which her life is centered. She spends comparatively little time discussing the stock market, sports, politics, and impersonal problems of workaday life such as do the men. Her preoccupation is with local events—particularly those local events which have a strong tinge of the personal such as bridge parties and moral scandals.



She frankly admits that when she goes calling she "talks about everybody in town." She touches at great length upon the care of babies, children, and husbands; illnesses, childbirth, cooking, clothing, and other subjects closely related to the home—always illustrating her theory in terms of Mineville personalities. Unlike her husband, she never tires of talking shop, and when she talks shop, persons are generally involved. Also, she can gossip for an hour over the telephone at will while he works with a lone partner in a dark recess far below the surface of the earth. In this way she may act as a gossip collector for him during the day and retail her findings to him when he returns from work. He may tell her what he has heard "at the mine," but this usually is much less than she has to tell him, and less personal.

A usual remark about those in the community who are known as "gossips" is: "Tell Mrs. So-and-So anything as a secret if you want it advertised all over town in a hurry." But Mineville has so many proficient gossipers that to select only those who are reputed to be gossips and to ignore the rest would be to produce an erroneous picture. A few typical examples will serve to bring out this point.

First we may note some factors which cause Mrs. Dunwell to be rated as the community's leading female "gossip." Mrs. Dunwell occupies a position of social prominence which normally places her somewhat in the public eye aside from publicity which she might derive from her gossiping. She is frank and quick to "jump to conclusions"; she spares no one, not even herself, when she decides to give her opinion. This impulsive frankness causes her to reveal passing flurries of envy and jealousy which would remain undisclosed in the case of the ordinary woman. Consequently, she is readily accused of having a tendency to exaggerate and distort, and



is feared and disliked by many. But there is no doubt that were she less prominent and less frank to all persons anywhere, she might gossip equally as much without being renowned as a community gossip, in the derogatory sense of the term.

The leading gossips tend to be persons with unusual ability to remember "everything about everybody." One of these is Ed Slade, who is known more as a "talker" than as a "gossip" because he is not a woman. Another was Mrs. Drake, who was not known as a gossip mainly because she was a recluse. Both Mr. Slade and Mrs. Drake were recognized as vocal social historians of the community, as can be seen from the following advice given when certain inside information was sought:

MISS X: You should see Ed Slade. He can tell you anything you want to know.

MR. X [*her father—interrupting*]: Yes, see Ed Slade. He knows all about everything in town. I came in 1889 and he was tending bar before he worked for me at that time. He can tell you lots and more too.

MRS. X: And he will be glad to tell you things. It's odd how some people can remember things. There was Mrs. Drake. Whenever I wanted to know anything I used to go over to her. She seemed to know everything about everybody and everything in town. It's too bad she died. She could have helped you.

She was not a gossip. She never told unless you asked but when you asked she sure knew.

MR. X: Sid Marshall is quite a talker. He came here after I did but he sure could tell you about everything since he came.

It is interesting that the men are especially prone to speak of the talkative members of their sex as "talkers" while females with the same propensities are classified as "gossips." In reply, the women contend, and perhaps not without justification, that the men are the "worst gossipers."

Whatever the truth may be, Mineville has some very talkative males who are much better situated to secure and spread the news than are the women. Among these is Sid Marshall.

“Sid” is the proprietor of a tailor shop in which an almost perpetual talk-fest is in progress throughout the day and often until late at night. Man after man “drops into Sid’s place” for a sociable chat and leaves such news as he has in return for a large supply from Sid and others who may have been present. Everything is discussed: from the habitual debtors of Mineville to the debtor nations of the World War; from the scandal of a Mineviller who just passed by the window to that involving presidents and kings. Religion, politics, psychology, economics, milady’s styles, fishing trips, smutty stories, the weather, and the merits of one another’s chewing tobacco—nothing is barred. But it would be a mistake to conceive of this visiting center as those of small towns are so often caricatured, that is, as made up of men of naïve intelligence who presume great wisdom. Their ideas and attitudes on problems of larger import are not provincialisms, but rather are the same as those had by city people, because of being derived from the same immediate sources: editors of leading periodicals, the radio, and the movies. On the other hand, on local matters the individuals force one another to keep close to facts by the ruthlessness by which they pounce upon him who errs.

There is no better place in Mineville to sense shifts in public opinion than Sid’s tailor shop. For news generally is not “out” long before someone brings it to Sid’s, whose position is much like that of the editor of a paper in that he tends to hear all sides of questions more rapidly than people in general. From these diverse points of view he tries to ar-

rive at the true statement of a situation. He becomes one of the best-informed men in town on local affairs, and his shop is one of Mineville's best substitutes for a daily newspaper and scandal sheet—a function pleasant to him and in no sense to his discredit, even though he is subjected to criticism by women who imagine that they are the particular objects under discussion in his shop.

But Dick McLeod is even more suggestive of the newspaper in that he is a circulating gossip. He wanders from person to person on Main Street dispensing and collecting gossip. It is a familiar and amusing sight to see Dick talking a short while to a person or group of persons from which he soon wanders to another person or group after standing alone and, apparently, digesting his "scoop." His headquarters are at Jim's moonshine joint.

Both Sid and Dick are old-timers. The impressions of forty years' residence upon their indelible memories furnish backgrounds for their interpretation of community events. Their remarkable grasps of detail—whether of present or past events—and their proclivities and advantages for accumulating information cause them to function as information bureaus upon local affairs. So well is this recognized that an inquiring individual is likely to be met with the statement: "You'd better see Dick McLeod or Sid Marshall about that."

In discussing this tendency to seek a known authority when in quest of news, a woman, herself a most proficient gossip, remarked:

Gossiping is a funny thing. Some people seem to find out everything. You know, that Roscoe Todd doesn't do a thing excepting go to town to see Dick McLeod to get the news; and he couldn't go to anyone better. Dick finds out everything and if people don't tell him of their own accord, he asks.

There are, of course, other outstanding agents of gossip and other gossiping centers on Main Street. Not only are there several business men who are very proficient gossips, but most of the business establishments have particular persons who "hang around and talk." In fact, wherever the people assemble informally a gossiping center tends to arise.

Those traditional gossip-dispensing bureaus, the barber shops, where the barber tries to talk about as many interesting things as possible to his customers, have changed somewhat since the war. One of the barbers observes:

Do you remember how there always used to be a gang of men hanging around the barber shops? I try to discourage them from hanging around my place nowadays since women and girls are an important part of my trade. Boy, how the guys used to talk in the old days! I'll bet there were more dirty jokes and more dirty remarks passed in the barber shops than anywhere in town. And how they gossiped! But things have changed. If the fellows do hang around now they have to be careful what they say in the presence of women and girls and so there isn't much to encourage them to loiter in a shop. Besides, women don't like to come into a shop if a lot of men are sitting around. There is plenty of talk now, but the subjects are different—as long as women are in the shop, at least.

Away from Main Street and from home the men do most of their gossiping in the mines and mills. Each group of workers tends to have certain members who stand out for their general talking abilities. Of forty-six men on one shift at the Salmon Mine two of these entertainers are in the lime-light. To quote a fellow-workman:

Talk about gossip! On our shift we have Fred Hare and Charlie Ratner in the center of the bunch before we go down the mine and at eating time, and I'll bet there ain't a woman in town who can equal those fellows. They never run out of gossip. You ought to see how they monopolize the conversation. It seems almost impossible that they can possibly know so much. Month after month their supply of gossip holds out.

Even among children there are prominent agents of gossip. They function much as do their elders, and when they are indiscreet they are subjected to the same disrepute. Breta Gaynor (age eleven) is a good example in the grade school. She talks incessantly and keeps widely informed upon the affairs of the school children, and upon those of adults as well. At a tender age Mineville children commence to take a naïve interest in the events of community gossip because they are likely to have had some acquaintance with a large share of persons and things of which they hear adults talk. The more intelligent five-year-old kindergarten children, for instance, have already reached a stage at which they are able to impart surprising bits of information to their teacher.

Influenced by small-town conditions, as are mature residents, Mineville children have leisure time, frankness, curiosity, and close contacts with large numbers at school to facilitate their gossiping. Through the grade school and through the high school waves of gossip of all sorts surge. Indeed, the schools are the largest gossiping centers in town although townsfolk, as a rule, are not aware of the fact.

#### GOSSIP AND THE FORMATION OF PUBLIC OPINION

Talking of things in general appears to be the favorite indoor and outdoor sport in Mineville. This is due in part to the neighborliness and community of interest among the people, and in part to the deficiency of other leisure-time activities in which there is an element of sociability. An interesting sidelight upon the effect of a community of interest was observed by a candidate for a county office:

I'll tell you something that surprised me. Because I was never much of a mixer, I thought I would have a hard time when I ran for office. I thought I wouldn't be able to find anything to talk about to people



I didn't know. It sure surprised me how easy it is to find something to talk about. We have so much in common with one another in this town, and even in the county, that we know a lot about people we've never talked to. For that reason I found that I could predict pretty well what would be an interesting topic of conversation to nearly everyone. I always knew some of their friends, where they worked, something about their children, and so forth. In a jiffy I could bridge the gap between not knowing people and becoming intimate with them. The trouble was not in finding something to talk about but rather that I had to be careful not to talk too much about intimate things for fear someone would start talk going around that the people shouldn't vote for me because I'm just an old gossipier anyhow. And then, I was pretty sure that some of the people were trying to get me to feel intimate with them so that I would confide things in them which they could use against me politically.

With such community of interest, and a general desire to tell the other fellow the latest news, it is not surprising that an exceptionally live bit of news, such as the death of a prominent citizen, attains almost complete circulation in the community in about two hours. Most of the people are likely to have the news in an hour. In a few minutes it reaches all of the business establishments on Main Street. "Too bad about Mr. So-and-So," the merchant characteristically says to his customers one by one. And wherever a group is congregated along the street the death becomes a topic of conversation. Meanwhile, with half of the people in town having telephones and by the age-old practice of "running in" to tell a neighbor, the news soon reaches those who perchance have not visited Main Street or otherwise encountered someone who might tell them. Community expectation of rapidity of circulation is attested by the fact that should such a death occur at nine o'clock in the morning and the information not reach a resident until late in the afternoon, his usual expression is, "I can't understand why



I didn't hear that sooner," and others say to him, "Where have you been? Everybody knew that by noon."

For several days such a topic is likely to be focal in the community. The man, his last illness, his family, etc., are discussed and rediscussed. A multitude of diverse bits of information and points of view have been brought into play before the subject drops out of the limelight.

Because as a social unit it is small and isolated, Mineville offers a most interesting laboratory for the study of public opinion. The participant-observer can witness the crystalizing of opinion in detail from its initial gropings to the final product in which more or less uniform attitudes and ideas in respect to a matter are characteristic over the whole community or in large factions. He will be struck with the rapid and varied shifts of opinion from one side of a question to another. He will see occasional cases when opinion becomes so fixed that there is a community-wide tendency for the people to become emotional if they are asked to consider the merits of the minority side of a matter. But he will find that such cases of callousness are usually temporary periods of high resistance, and that in the long run the "truth" is acknowledged by the people as a whole, if an item of gossip is sufficiently alive to keep it before them long enough. The people are so persistently confronted with untruths or partial truths in local rumor that they have a wholesome skepticism regarding it which naturally results in a rigorous, although often unconscious piecing-together of evidence before a final conclusion is reached.

When news "gets out," one of the first steps of a resident is to trace it, and, as a rule, he is quite keen in tracing the origins and course of gossip because of his insight into the relations of Minevillers to one another. Resolutely he sets

about to build his theory as to the channels through which an item of gossip has passed, through certain outstanding gossipers, and through a network of relatives, friends, and others who have frequent and intimate contact with one another. He knows much of the probable motives of these people and of the reliability of what they might say. In questioning the truth of a bit of news, for instance, he will say, "She got it from Mrs. Jacobs and it's a cinch Mrs. Jacobs got it from Mrs. Black and you know what a liar Mrs. Black is."

#### HOW GOSSIP DESTROYS PRIVACY

We have already indicated how gossip brings together odds and ends of one's private life which he reveals about himself to numerous persons over a long period of time. We have not yet discussed the factor which accounts for the feeding of most of the very intimate personal information into the streams of gossip, that is, betrayed confidences.

Everyone trusts that certain persons in possession of intimate facts of his personal life will not betray him. He would feel most wretched if he actually believed that no one is to be trusted to hold such knowledge in due respect. His father mother, wife, brother, and several good friends he assumes will shield parts of his life from the public gaze. And while we have no evidence upon which to assert that his faith is not justified for the most part, bit by bit details of his private affairs sift out by way of betrayed confidences. This happens everywhere, but the consequences are especially serious in a small town such as Mineville where people seize with alacrity upon such information and shortly insure its perpetuation by making it a public acquisition. Husbands, for instance, little know what information of their private

affairs their wives may have told "in confidence" to women friends who in turn have broadcast it to the community "in confidence." It is by means of just such a network of interlocking confidences that the "whole town" secures the most whispered of information almost as readily as it does ordinary news, despite the strong inhibitions the people have regarding "talking about" others because of being afraid that their words will "get back" to the person "talked about." Fortunately, however, most Minevillers do not seem to realize how well others know them, and so the human longing for someone in whom to confide, to whom to unburden the weight of troubles, still finds extensive expression in the town.

By way of illustration, the following phenomena attending broken confidences may be noted as commonplace in Mineville, as elsewhere:

a) There are irresponsible information purveyors—persons who must tell.

b) While people are on intimate terms they normally confide in and otherwise learn a great deal about one another. When their relations are temporarily or permanently broken, the situation is ripe for the wholesale breaking of confidences.

c) The desire to appear interesting to others often causes indiscretion to the point of violation of confidences.

d) Persons are led into disclosing confidential information in order to prove points in arguments.

e) There are "accidental slips" which are not realized as broken confidences until after they have occurred.

f) Many confidences are broken because as time passes people are likely to forget that they received the information concerned in confidence.

g) Some people care less about privacy than others and so they easily disregard what are to them the excessive requests of others for secrecy. The leading female gossip of the town, as has been indicated, secures her disrepute largely because of telling about others that which she does not care if others tell about her.

#### SCANDALS

Novelists have painted vivid pictures of small-town life which have captured the popular imagination and have made small-town people appear to be a peculiar species of scandal-hungry creatures. Somehow the lurid exposés featured by city daily papers have been considered to be more worthy of sophisticated people than rural gossip, and there has been a tendency to minimize the fact that city folks do a great deal of gossiping among their more intimate associates.

If Minevillers have a greater interest in scandal than urbanites, it is because of a difference in situation, not in people. It so happens that besides sensational news derived from city dailies, the residents of the town are living under conditions conducive to the ferreting-out, spreading, and perpetuation of an extensive fund of local scandal. And this news is the more interesting because it affects the status of persons with whom they are obliged to have close social relationships. Certainly it would be more interesting if one were to know that the only iceman in town has tendencies to be a paramour than it is to read in a city paper of the same proclivities on the part of some strange iceman one has never seen.

There is a fund of whispered gossip about every resident of a small town. Actually but an infinitesimal part of this is communicated directly to the person concerned, although

the people say, "Everything gets back sooner or later in this town." Such news characteristically travels in channels which avoid him. It frequently buzzes among his closest friends and yet escapes him. This is particularly true of scandal.

We have no intention to expose, in detail, Mineville's notorious scandals. The following are suggestive, however.

*Granny Erdla.*—There is a tendency for scandal to be preserved over a long period of time by old residents. Granny Erdla, for instance, was able to present stories purported to prove that Grandma Linder "wasn't what she should have been" in Germany, sixty years ago.

*The dead.*—Even the dead are not spared. There is the instance of a woman whose sexual proclivities had been a matter of gossip for twenty-five years before her death. In discussing her relations with a prominent man long dead, a resident said:

He died without much money. He was too much on women.

You remember the Mrs. Zeller who died?

Well, he was with her. She got the money out of him all right. One time they went riding to Fulton and the horses ran home and left them out there together. That was a good one.

*The relations between Mr. X and Mrs. Y.*—This case was the most glaring subject of scandal in the community for about fifteen years. Ever recurring incidents proclaimed the factual basis of the case and kept the matter before the public. Efforts of the principals to maintain secrecy were almost futile because a suspicious public was alert to grasp every telltale bit of evidence.

*Mr. A and Mrs. B.*—The illicit relations of Mr. A and Mrs. B have been carried on for about ten years. During that time an overwhelming amount of evidence against them

has become public. Everyone in town knows of the case, even the children. The principals are very careless in their public behavior, supposing, it is said, that by being open about "casual" conversations on Main Street they are avoiding suspicion. But the knowing Mineviller says, "There's Mr. A talking to Mrs. B again. It's bad enough for everybody to know about their affair without their advertising it."

The public sees them unconsciously displaying obvious fascination in the presence of one another. As Mrs. B walks by, Mr. A furtively appraises her physical form as well as the voluptuous swing in her stride which often becomes exaggerated when she is aware of his presence.

#### FEAR OF GOSSIP

In Mineville, individual variation in respect to fear of gossip is very wide. There is to be found the whole gamut of degrees from persons who are excessively fearsome lest their affairs become matter of gossip to those who defy, ignore, or are not well cognizant of the relentlessness with which news travels and the thorough circulation which it attains.

In the main, however, Minevillers wittingly and unwittingly are affected by a strong fear of gossip. Long experience has shown them that information tends to become distorted in passing from person to person, and so, even though the public in question is small enough that the truth is likely to become generally known in time if it is known to a few persons, the people do not wish to have their affairs thrown into the gristmill of conversation and argument through which so much news must pass before it is accurately consumed. This reluctance to be "talked about" does much to inhibit the circulation not only of reprehensible gossip but of



permissible news. A warning voice is ever ready to whisper into the resident's ear, "Be careful! It will get all over town," or "What will people say?" And even in formal meetings someone may arise to say, "We'd better watch our step or the whole town will be on our necks before we adjourn."

No resident of Mineville supposes that he is not "talked about." Even obscure townfolk complain that they live under the spotlight of the public eye and hence must become hardened to the inevitable gossip, if they are to have peace of mind. But withal, there is so much open defiance to gossip as to suggest that many residents do not realize the harm which their acts may bring upon their reputations at present, and even twenty years in the future.

## CHAPTER VIII

### WHAT THEY THINK OF ONE ANOTHER

Most normal persons are vitally concerned about their status, that is, about what other people think of them, about how they are rated as compared with other people. But those who live in a city are faced with a very different situation from that in Mineville. The city-dweller can well afford to have only passing concern about the attitudes of most of the people he sees, and even in respect to most of those with whom he associates, whereas the Mineviller tends to have some personal interest in nearly all persons he sees during the normal course of his daily life. He knows them and they know him. When he meets them he pigeonholes them more or less accurately with reference to the parts they play in the community life, and he is aware that they are rating him with the same thoroughness. He knows better than to suppose that he can deceive many of them into thinking that he is something radically different from what he really is. He is constantly aware of being rated not only upon present acts and appearances but upon those far back in his past life. In rebellion he may say: "I don't care what people in this town think of me as long as my conscience is clear." By this he means that he is prepared to disregard, externally at least, the attitudes which part of the people have toward him, not those of all of them. But fellow-townfolk know that he is only trying to deceive himself into forgetting how much he cares about the attitudes of the people as a whole. The very emotion with which he usually says he does not care indicates the pressure which he feels from the regard which

townsfolk in general have for him. As long as he lives a normal life in the town he cannot avoid meeting all of these people, and so something is added to his comfort if they like and respect him. And on the more practical side, he knows that he would do well to respect their good will because his interests may overlap with theirs in the future, and because an enemy in a small town has a great deal of power. In fact, the most insignificant townsman may make the most powerful feel his influence by artfully feeding adverse propaganda into the machinery of small-town gossip.

Minevillers are very sensitive to discrepancies between the rating they would put upon a person and that which he would put upon himself. They show this in remarks such as "He thinks he's the only one in town who knows anything"; "She makes a person tired; she's trying to get in with the swells"; or "She tries to act so virtuous; everybody knows what she is."

In a never ceasing whirl of personal relationships the people of the little town pass judgment upon one another in countless ways. Here we shall attempt to discuss certain of these which will not be treated elsewhere and which stand out as characteristic of the town.

#### ACHIEVEMENT, CHARACTER, PERSONALITY, APPEARANCE

"Making good," at whatever activity, is important in Mineville. The town has its outstanding successes, its great bulk of ordinary successes, and its failures in many spheres. The most prominent of these are: (1) acquisition of this world's goods, (2) attainment of positions of dominance in the mining industry, (3) mastery of a profession, (4) success as a parent, and (5) success as a housekeeper. Always, however, success tends to be determined by a sort of average

between the individual's accomplishments and his opportunities, so that a particular accomplishment for one person might be accounted as evidence of success while for another it would be failure. And one may be sure that in the general knowledge of persons' private affairs, account is taken not only of their accomplishments but of their opportunities as well.

The outstanding economic successes are middle-class people with incomes which usually range from five thousand dollars to ten thousand dollars per year. There are at least twelve of these in the community. But the average Mineville citizen does not aspire to exceptional achievement, for as long as he remains in the community, he sees little hope for advancement in his work. He falls into what is known as the "Mineville rut," in which he becomes adjusted to "getting along on the day's pay" and looking forward to nothing better unless it be an ethereal chance of stumbling onto a rich mine.

An example of the typical Mineville workingman is found in Orland Nelson. Orland is twenty-five years of age. He is known as a "good steady worker." He lives with his mother and his dissipations are very modest. Thoroughly "respectable," he is never condemned for failure or praised for success. No one would expect him to rise above his present station as laborer. He vaguely aspires to go to an automobile or an aircraft school but is unable to bestir himself from his "Mineville rut." In his own words: "I might get up enough ambition to go to school yet. It's sure an easy thing to get into a rut in a town like this, especially when you've got an easy job like mine." This statement, made over two years ago, still applies, for as time goes on Orland becomes more firmly rooted in his easy job and in the community. Should he marry, he would be committing himself

to virtual life-imprisonment in Mineville at his present earning capacity or less, for such is the lot of the average married "home boy."

The persons adjudged "failures" in earning a livelihood are much more numerous in Mineville than the successes. In fact, the people seem to loathe admitting directly that a fellow-townsmen is a success, while they are ever ready to brand him as a failure if a reason can be devised for so doing. However, not much in the way of financial achievement is expected from most of the people, and so public attention centers on the various business men on Main Street who, through poor management, slowly but surely "go on the rocks." Failure in any case is a bitter morsel to take, but business failure in Mineville where the whole town watches the slow downfall with a knowing eye is wretched. "I give him six months before he'll have to close," says one person, and another answers, "I've got the low-down on his credit with the wholesalers. He's got to pay cash for everything he buys. He can't last two months."

Coming now to positions of dominance in the mining industry as criteria of success, we find that the average man has practically no chance or hope of being advanced. The mining-company superintendents are always trained professional men or experts who have acquired reputations elsewhere. Ordinary workers do succeed in becoming "shift bosses" and foremen but, after all, the few opportunities of this sort are soon exhausted and men hold such jobs for many years.

Successful parenthood is a major accomplishment toward which Minevillers aspire. The parent who spoils or otherwise poorly guides his children receives no end of criticism. Jealousy of the most successful parents is quite prevalent.

Finally, we come to the success of a woman as a wife and housekeeper. Intimacy is a factor in causing women to be careful about their housework because they are sensitive to the fact that someone may tell "all over town" that they are "sloppy housekeepers." Women are relentless in rating one another as poor in this respect and often extend sympathy to the unfortunate husband and children.

Next to "making good," the matter of good and bad personal habits appears to be most important as a determinant of status. Here persons' conditions or conduct which would go unnoticed in a city are subjects of public discussion. Mineville has her good and her bad small children; "good girls" and sexually loose girls or "chippies"; "good boys" and libertines; "good Christian women" and wives of easy virtue; men of exemplary sex habits and adulterers; "clean" people and those known or reputed to have venereal taint; smoking and non-smoking women; teetotalers and drunkards; antigambling reformists and professional gamblers; "suckers" and crooked gamblers; lazy and hard workers; irresponsible and dependable workers, etc. And somewhere between the persons at each of these many extremes we find all the rest of the people in the community rated in countless shadings of degree on the same traits. Truly, Mineville presents a telescoped picture of human nature of America. Only the extremely pathological and the genius seem to be absent. With such an array of character displaying itself under the limelight of small-town conditions, Mineville becomes a laboratory par excellence for the study of personality from the cradle to the grave.

The ruthless "crooks" and equally ruthless champions of "square dealing" found in giant enterprises involving the whole United States are to be seen in miniature in Mineville.



The town has always had its Sinclairs, Falls, and Dohenys. The "dirty work" of community leaders of forty-five years ago is a favorite topic of conversation among old-timers. Of the present crop of leading "crooks" the following phrases are typical: "He's no good"; "His word isn't worth a thing"; "He'll take all you have, if he can"; "He's a nice fellow but watch out for him"; "Such hypocrites! Harold is a leading member of his church and Don sings his head off in the choir of his," etc. To be an outstanding "crook" the resident must do things on a large scale, i.e., he must be a lawyer, a banker, a mining promoter, or a leading gambler.

It is difficult to say whether intimacy prevents more dishonesty than it encourages. On the side of prevention we have a suggestion in the following statement by an intelligent leading citizen of over forty years' residence, after he had been doublecrossed in a financial deal by some strangers:

Even in Mineville one gets so he expects a certain amount of dishonesty. But there is usually some truth in what you are told in a town like this, and so you don't get used to thinking that a man is approaching you with a business proposition made 100 per cent out of whole cloth. I don't like to be forced to treat every man who approaches me with a proposition as if he is a potential crook, but I guess we get so we trust people too much in a town like this.

The dishonest resident operates at a certain disadvantage in Mineville because the people soon "get his number." His business propositions tend to be under suspicion until thoroughly investigated, and even then the wary fellow-resident may be awake to the likelihood of a concealed "joker" in the situation. The community as a whole tends to know even the obscure person who does not "pay his bills," whose word is unreliable, or who is unscrupulous in business dealings.

Should he decide to mend his ways, his old status sometimes persists for many years, in the minds of some people, as, for instance, in the case of the old man who "never could stand" Edgar Stone "after I saw him turn that trick in '82."

A community habit is to condemn the dishonest but to give the honest man little or no credit for his honesty. Even those who are rated as having "no room to talk" flail the "crooks." Their pretense gives occasion for remarks such as "He should know better than to suppose he can get away with that stuff. I think I would keep quiet if I were in his boots. Everybody knows what he is."

Publicity given to dishonesty in an intimate community no doubt encourages some acts of honesty which would not take place in a large city. One who wishes to toy with the sensitivity of Mineville people to their reputations for dishonesty may rather casually make some disparaging remarks to them about people who do not pay their bills, and sometimes he will see most interesting signs of embarrassment, unknowingly revealed. But in spite of this and other evidences of the pressure of intimate public opinion we have seen that intimacy leads people to abuse the credit system at the stores; and the town has many calloused habitual debtors who are always in debt just as much as others will permit them to be.

Since the Mineville business man builds his trade so much on a basis of friendship with his customers, he has the most disagreeable task of calling his friends into the office and requesting or insisting that they pay their bills. Even when he is very tactful he often loses both a friend and a customer and sometimes the trade of several related families at one stroke. People take advantage of the fact that he likes them, and so if he is not very careful his sympathies lead him to lose a great deal of money. Indeed, several business failures

in Mineville have resulted mainly because men "couldn't refuse a friend credit."

Offhand, likeability appears to be an especially important trait in a small town where personal relations exert so decisive an influence. Still, the large number of disagreeable and disliked persons in Mineville who seem to get along better than one would expect of them under city conditions suggests that there are respects in which likeableness (of a superficial sort, at least) may be less important in Mineville than in a city. These persons seem to feel that people know what they are and hence that they have no occasion to put on a veneer which might make them considered likeable under more superficial contacts.

Owing to the community habit of focusing attention upon traits which are considered discreditable, little mention is made of those persons who are kindly, modest, courteous, agreeable, and the like. The following sample of the most common characterizations on this score are illustrative:

1. Mineville has her best-natured and most popular man.
2. More people stand out as "crabs," "cranks," or "knockers" than as good-natured and agreeable. Much legitimate criticism is muffled because of the readiness with which these epithets are hurled.
3. Mineville has her "wise guys" or "smart Alecs" who are given to expressing their opinions in a cocksure manner. They are cordially disliked.
4. There are certain outstanding braggarts, particularly those who are notoriously irritating because of their boasting about their children.
5. There are inveterate talkers who monopolize the conversation. In explaining his lateness for dinner a man may say, So-and-So "had me cornered and I had to wait until he got out of breath."
6. There are "catty" women who are feared and avoided. They are those who exaggerate, distort, or even invent statements they make about other people, and they seem to enjoy doing others harm.

7. Any person in town is likely to be disliked because of real or imagined jealousy or envy on his part. But some are rated by the community on the whole as "jealous" or "envious."
8. Overbearing manners are the chief causes for the unpopularity of some leading citizens.
9. People are readily thought to be uninteresting.
10. Mineville has her "mixers," those who can be counted on to "glad hand" any strangers in a gathering and who are "the life of the party" wherever they may be.
11. With all its "knockers," the town has a few boosters, most of whom are in the Rotary Club.
12. The people dislike those whom they characterize as "gossips," and yet everyone gossips in Mineville.
13. And last, but not least, is the meanest man in town who has refused to permit small children to pluck wild flowers in his pastures.

There is much generosity in Mineville but little credit is given for it. People know or think they know what the other fellow can afford, and if he does not dispose of his funds according to their judgment, he is "extravagant" or "tight," when not a "fool." But, it is the "tightwads" who receive the most comment. In that class are placed some of the leading citizens who simply practice sensible economy.

Minevillers feel that they are qualified to pass the most extreme judgments upon one another. A resident never knows which of the townsfolk is characterizing him as "bright," "sensible," "prejudiced," "cracked," "peculiar," "a little off," "crazy," "goofy," "a fool," or a "moron." Although such expressions are usually emotional explosions which have little relation to the facts, there are certain persons in the community to whom they may be and are applied with accuracy. For instance, there is Miss Dash who for a quarter of a century has been feared and avoided because of an unbalanced mind which in a city might well have caused

her to be placed in an insane asylum. Then there are a number of simple-minded folks such as "Goofy Freddie" who usually have nicknames which symbolize the ratings which the community places upon their mentalities.

The average Mineviller is prone to exaggerate the value of common sense. He likes to feel that his extraordinary common sense compensates to a large extent for his lack of schooling. He is disposed to discourse upon the impracticability of "book knowledge" and to think of school men as theorists who may necessarily be expected to be somewhat lacking in common sense at times. The ideal picture of a school man as one whose intelligence is respected by the whole community has never been realized in Mineville.

A college education is not prerequisite to a position in the local intellectual élite. This is especially true among women where the professional position of the husband is high and enables her to have more than the usual amount of leisure so that she can read select novels, the discussion of which forms a principal criterion of intelligence. The intellectual élite of the men is composed to a greater extent of college graduates, since it consists primarily of the professional men of the town. And, of course, leadership in this group depends upon distinction in particular lines of work rather than in ability to discuss novels, antiques, and fashions.

Under the head of "accomplishments" come those persons who are known for their ability or attempts at music, elocution, and painting. Foremost in this list is Mrs. Deschamps, a pianist of more than ordinary ability who accompanied Tetrzzini during several months of rehearsing for a grand-opera season. Mrs. Deschamps plays so well that she discourages others from attempting to appear at the piano in public.



It is among the singers that Mineville has many aspirants to local fame. These persons receive a deluge of criticism after every performance, appreciation of their efforts often depending little upon the merits of the voice and a great deal upon whether or not the person is liked. The Mineviller complains, "I wish we had some new talent on these home-talent programs once in a while. The same people are always doing the performing." But, little does the average Mineviller realize that the singers are not always proud to appear in public, as he supposes. On the one hand, they attempt not to appear so often that their public will become weary of them and, on the other, they are supposed to donate their services upon all occasions. Abuse is heaped upon them when they do not appear to be eager to sing. Little credit is given for countless past vocal exhibitions, some of which they enjoyed and were proud to give, but many of which came at times when they were in ill health or for other reasons preferred not to sing.

Certain Minevillers are conspicuous to their fellow-residents because of their unusual or abnormal physical size or condition and for good or poor looks. Among men, women, and children, the town has its examples of the tallest, shortest, fattest, thinnest, and most crippled and deformed. It has its ugliest woman and its ugliest man, its strongest man, its one-legged man, and its blind man. Also it has those who are regarded as good looking although no man, woman, or girl stands in high relief for good looks in the public judgment, there being a stronger tendency to mention uncomeliness than good looks. In any case, those of distinct physical types or appearances are used as symbols, as measuring sticks in describing other people. For example, in order to



describe a woman, residents will say, "She is almost as ugly as Mrs. Shotwell," or "I'll bet she's as fat as Mrs. Jolly."

A large wardrobe of expensive clothes is not a prerequisite to high status in Mineville. Many of the most prominent men "dress up" only for a special occasion. To be sure, when a woman gets a new suit, dress, or the like, her friends and associates know it at once, and if it be a very distinctive article the "whole town" knows it in a short time. But the economic level of the people prevents general overemphasis of clothing, for such purchases usually necessitate surrender of automobiles, radios, trips to Gold, etc.—sacrifices which the people are not willing to make.

While the town has its "best-dressed woman" and "best-dressed man," the most interesting individuals on the score of appearance are on the other end of the scale. Here is Ezra Allan, a man who has assumed positions of leadership, but whose perennial need for a haircut and shave causes him to look like a hopeless tramp. Even more amusing is "Overshoes Lizzie," a Finn woman who wears huge shoes, lifts her feet high as she takes her lengthy strides, wears long and loosely hanging skirts, and—drunk or not—is always in a great hurry to reach her destination.

#### THE SOCIAL HIERARCHY

When one person rates another as different from other persons in a particular respect he may always have a certain amount of feeling that the one is "better than," more desirable than, or "not as good as" others for having that trait. But people are rated on many points. They are placed high in one respect and low in another. The sum of all of these ratings of "higher than" and "lower than" determines the person's position on the social scale. A woman's poor looks, ignorance, and dubious sex morals are readily counter-

acted by her husband's high financial standing, the traditional position of her family on the social scale, or by her excellent singing voice. In fact, there have been instances in which families have reached the top of Mineville's social ladder despite their having been notoriously lacking in money, business success, professional achievement, sex morals, intelligence, artistic accomplishments, pleasing personal appearance, or high nationality rating. On the other hand, there have been others who have been unable to attain the very top rungs even with a generous amount of most of these criteria. None, however, has surmounted the ordinary race barriers, and the stronger nationality obstacles are overcome with great difficulty.

As a problem, race is not a matter of much moment in Mineville because the stock is white excepting one Negro, one Chinaman, and members of several families that have Indian blood in their veins. The Negro is called "Nigger Wesse" and is known affectionately by most of the male population of the town. He is treated with respect, but this is not in recognition of equality. Of his peculiar status he said:

Well, I always tried to be square and not bother anybody and in time people found that out. I seemed to get off on the right foot at the start. I have been accepted as an equal by most of the people in town ever since I landed here forty years ago this month. Of course, there were and are a few people who make me feel uncomfortable but most of them have always treated me as an equal.

If you want the reason in absolute truth why I've stayed here, I'll tell you. I've stayed here all of these years because of the way I've been respected and treated here. In a strange place I'm just another "nigger" and here I'm "Nigger Wesse." People have always treated me well in this town. I've left town but I've always come back.

I'm the lowest down now that I ever was. Oh, I was arrested a couple of times for horse-stealing years ago but they never convicted me. But, generally, I've been pretty square and, you know, people soon find you out if you are on the level.

Because "Nigger Wesse" and "Tom the Chinaman" are the only members of their races in town, they are somewhat objects of curiosity and fear to small children. Both are quite conspicuous although Tom does not stand out in such high relief as Wesse because he is silent and reclusive. The local mestizos have all married full whites, and they seem to occupy the social positions which their intellectual and economic positions warrant. Similarly, the only Jewish family in town occupies a very satisfactory position as do two other families of whom people whisper, "They are Jews." In general, only persons who do not know the mestizo families and the Jewish family or, who wish to cast aspersions upon them, refer to them as Indians or Jews. While there is some prejudice against them, the people as a whole know them too well as persons to be made very unreasonable thereby.

Assimilation of immigrants is hastened up to a certain point by the limited number of possible associates among their own people which causes an almost unavoidable intimacy with Minevillers as a whole. But there is a tendency for the original derogatory rating of an immigrant family as "foreigners" to be perpetuated in the eyes of the main body of the community to the second and third generations. Finns, Italians, and those from the Balkan countries have difficulty in surmounting nationality barriers completely even when thoroughly Americanized. There is the case of a Serbian family that was having difficulty in overcoming nationality obstacles in Mineville. This family went to Los Angeles and after five or six years returned to Mineville for a visit. They brought with them different conceptions of themselves. In their minds they were no longer small-town folks nor were they "foreigners." Mineville still sought to treat them as "Bohunks," and they could feel the shock of being thrust back into their old status. But Mineville's

opinion was not a thing to be taken so seriously as formerly. In Los Angeles, financial prosperity, broadened vision, and recognition on their merits had been theirs. They asked no favors of the little town in which they had strived so hard in the past. Long before the end of their two weeks' visit their verdict was, "We don't see how we ever were able to live in this town so long." For, while Mineville is very friendly to "Bohunks," "Dagos," and "Finns," as a rule it insists that they "keep their places." The fact that they very rarely intermarry with the rest of the population is quite convincing proof of their status despite the seeming popularity of some of their young people. (Only the Serbian parents strongly discourage marriage outside their own group.)

When old-timers see signs of discrimination they often speak of the good old days when "one person was as good as another." Allowing for some sentimentality on their parts, it is not surprising that there was less class discrimination during the first ten years of the community's history than at present. For Mineville was a frontier community composed almost exclusively of men, and as yet so new and unprosperous that no man had risen far above his fellows. These men did not know much about one another's past lives and they expected to leave town as soon as they had "struck it rich" in a mine or had accumulated a large enough grubstake to move farther into the frontier region. But many of them never left, and the demand which they started for at least an external appearance of democracy still persists among the great majority of men of the town.

An obvious assumption of superior flesh on the part of a man has always made him unpopular in Mineville. This is not so true in the case of women. In fact, the women of the

town are not expected to be and never have been as democratic as the men. Upon their arrival in that frontier settlement of the early days, niceties of social distinction became of increased importance. A community which for a decade had had over fifty men to every woman was soon transformed. Those men who had secretly been overproud of their "blood" now were more frank in giving expression to their feelings of class distinction. The people, as a whole, began to assume more or less definite places on a social grading scale, at the top of which were proud easterners and southerners who introduced snobbishness into the community and who formed Mineville's original "four hundred" or social upper crust.

Since that pioneer day of over a half-century ago the situation has changed but little excepting that the present "four hundred" seems to be less proud than some of its forerunners. Each successive period has had countless gradations in social position from the bottom to the top of the social ladder, which have been recognized by all and yet which have always been so informal, unstable, and intangible as almost to defy accurate investigation. So we will confine our inquiry mainly to the upper rungs of the social ladder and to the "society" activities of women where overt evidence is abundant and clear cut.

Membership in the "four hundred" has typically depended upon the high position of the family breadwinner in the mining industry, or upon his being a business or professional man of note in the community. But even with these attributes, families are often excluded because they do not conform to the tastes of those already solidly within the pale. Then there are other attributes which, if mixed in the right proportions, are conducive to acceptance. These are personal attractiveness, musical accomplishments, college education,



evidences of genteel family training, and the money, inclination, and ability to follow ways of the aristocrat.

The present members of the "four hundred" with some of their qualifications are:

#### 1. THE DESCHAMPS

Mr. D.—Drygoods merchant, excellent conversationalist, very sociable, witty, has the good manners which are typical of his French parentage, member of a pioneer family of the state.

Mrs. D.—The outstanding artist in town [pianist], has been abroad, feels and is conceded by many to be superior to her environment.

#### 2. THE MCDALES

Mr. McD.—Leading lawyer, has no children, and can afford the "best of everything," good conversationalist, "a jolly good fellow."

Mrs. McD.—The best-dressed woman in town, the best bridge-player.

#### 3. THE O'NEILS

Mr. O.—Manager of Mineville Public Utility Company, very sociable, "spends all he earns" in order to keep pace with the McDales—so his knockers say.

Mrs. O.—Sociable and full of fun.

#### 4. THE LUNDBERGS

Mr. L.—Occupies the dominating position in the local mining industry.

Mrs. L.—Lives in fine house and has much leisure.

#### 5. THE DAYS

Mr. D.—The town physician.

Mrs. D.—College graduate, sings, very sociable.

#### 6. THE WAITES

Mr. W.—Receiver for a defunct bank, insurance man, and real estate dealer.

Mrs. W.—Has a very queenly manner, inherited money, has fine home.



## 7. THE FOSTERS

Mr. F.—Occupies leading position in mining industry.

Mrs. F.—A very gracious hostess who has the assistance of a distinctively refined mother.

The “four hundred” is not a well-knit group. Certain of the foregoing persons might even express surprise that they are among its members, for they themselves often take an attitude of detachment and speak in derision of “that four hundred bunch.” But the community has no doubt that they are members in a very real sense, and does not hesitate to speak of them as such—especially of the women. After all, with one or two possible exceptions, they recognize one another’s approximate equality in social status at the top of the social ladder, and the community agrees. Some genuine friendships exist between members, but at bottom each family occupies its high position on its own merits and not because it is “in” with the rest. That the group is not a “mutual admiration society” is shown in the fact that Mr. A is much disgusted with Mr. B and aspires to “drive Mr. C out of town”; Mr. D cares little for the society of most of the group, being engrossed in his work; Mr. E and his wife “have no use for Mr. X”; Mr. X stands amused at the lack of intellectuality of most of the group; Mr. X and Mr. D are ridiculed for being “tightwads”; Mrs. G has little admiration for any of the group and associates with them only for lack of better; Mrs. H is ridiculed owing to her attempts at singing and her foreign parentage; Mrs. I is tolerated only because her husband is so nice a fellow, others laughing up their sleeves at her plebeian lineage and traits. Still when *most* members of the “four hundred” entertain they tend to entertain one another rather than to stoop to lower social levels for persons who might please them more.

Several groups of persons may be noted who have ambition to "get in with" and "travel with" the "four hundred." There are those who are very eager for admittance into this social aristocracy but who fail for various reasons; those who have sufficient money and prestige to win places in the group if they were willing to tolerate the ideals of some of its members; those who, after many attempts, have become resigned to the fate of never arriving within the pale; those who have no interest in "social" things although they might be acceptable to the "four hundred"; those who don't like some of the members of the group; and lastly, those to whom its "social" life is so foreign that they are almost unaware of its existence.

At all events, members of the *élite* wield great influence in the town. What they do arouses comment, whether approved or not. They tend to be the first to introduce the "latest" in fashion, whether it be in automobiles, radios, electric refrigerators, clothing, changes in interior decorations of home, smoking among women, or the smallest of fads. If Mrs. So-and-So of the "four hundred" has something new, it will become a topic of conversation until many others decide to have the same sort of thing or not, and likewise, if she recommends a certain theatrical which she saw in Los Angeles or even if her cousin saw it and pronounced it worth seeing, the Gold theater which presents it will be sure of a considerable representation of Minevillers.

Because of the acknowledged leadership of the "four hundred" its members are held responsible for setting good or bad examples in the community. Several of its men receive criticism for breaking the prohibition law while some of its women are flayed for smoking, drinking, "playing bridge for money," and for other behavior which meets the disapproval

of many of the people. Mrs. Swift, who dominated the "social" life of the town during most of the first twenty-five years of the present century, was held responsible for encouraging such conduct and sex laxities as well. Gus Fredericks placed the blame for his broken home at her door, when, regarding his wife, he said:

I'd take her back at any time if she happens to decide that she has made a mistake. But she will have to settle down and forget about that high life she seems to crave. I told her this. Why, we never would have had any trouble but for such things. The first five years we were married we never had an argument. Then she got a taste of drinking parties, dirty remarks, and the kind of people who like such things and I blame Mrs. Swift for it. I'll tell you, I think Mrs. Swift did far more harm than she ever did good in this town. She was the high society of the town and she was looked up to by other women, and when she drank and smoked and did other things and got by with it, others started. My wife used to say to me, "Look at Mrs. Swift! She has a good time as she pleases and she is popular." If it hadn't been for Mrs. Swift's bad example I probably would have my wife today. I'll tell you, they can say all they want to about Mrs. Swift's fine service to this town; she hurt more than she helped. I told the Methodist minister here one time that he might raise money by having Mrs. Swift sing but that in doing so he was tearing down more than he was building up. You can't give honors to a woman like that without encouraging the bad things she does.

Members of the present "four hundred" do not make conspicuous attempts to "highbrow" the common folk, but most of them show a great preference for the company of one another. This last is sufficient to prevent outsiders from supposing that they are within the pale, regardless of the external demonstrations of friendliness with which the élite may treat them. Still, two of the families appear to have most of their dearest friends outside the select group in which the community places them.

As conspicuous and envied a place as this social aristocracy may play in its own little community, it is made up of but ordinary middle-class Americans who would be most obscure and unknown to fame in a large city. Truly its members are big frogs in a small pool whose humble station may be seen in the fact that the women do the bulk of their own housework. Only one of them has a regular part-time servant—an advantage had by two other women of the town who are not rated as of “four hundred” caliber.

Several marginal families are knocking at the door of the “four hundred.” Occasionally they may gain entrée to the select circle, but in the long run they are obliged to content themselves with being “not quite in.” Bitter as this often makes them, they have the satisfaction of feeling much closer to the élite than the many who are found upon successively lower rungs of the social ladder which are difficult to delimit but which are none the less matters of great moment to their occupants.

In attempting to arrive at some adequate picture of the seriousness with which this hierarchical social ranking is taken among Mineville women, no better device is at hand than an analysis of the place of the bridge party in the community. This is true because bridge parties form the nuclei about which most of the formal “social” gatherings of the town are built and because they are engrossing and frequent events in the lives of practically all of the women from the lower middle class to the “four hundred.”

A typical series of three bridge parties was staged by two townswomen in the autumn of 1930. In all, seventy-five members of their sex were entertained. The following information was secured from the respective husbands of the hostesses who “listened in” on the conversations:

*October 7.*—The two women, who may be classified hierarchically just below the group which is marginal to the “four hundred,” met on this day to make preliminary arrangements for the parties. In the following analysis they will be mentioned under their first names: Mrs. Ellis is “Violet,” Mrs. Dunn is “Helen.”

The problem of allotting the women to the various parties according to their ages and “swellness” and according to how much they are liked by those entertaining will be seen to be a weighty one. One woman is invited with the old women in order to insult her; another is left out entirely because of extreme enmity; another is invited because they want to “get in” with her; and two are invited because they are out of town and unable to be present.

VIOLET: Where are those names we wrote down, Helen?

HELEN: Here they are.

VIOLET: All right. I'll read them. [*She read a list containing sixteen names of young women who attend bridge parties.*] Now, can you think of anyone else we should have on this list?

HELEN: Well, if Mrs. Newton is no especial friend of yours, I would rather not have her.

We have Mrs. Mooney in with the old women but she does go around with this young crowd.

VIOLET: Leave her in with the old women. I hate her so much that I would like to insult her but we have to ask her.

HELEN: Let's put her down with the young crowd and if anyone of these sixteen declines then we can stick in Mrs. Mooney.

VIOLET: All right. I wish she would decline but she never does.

Yes, Leona Motley is out of town and I hope she stays out for a while. I tell you who we should ask and that is Martha Saylor. She isn't here but that is just why we should ask her because we won't have her and I bet when she comes back Mrs. Gudger will give some swell parties for her and we'll get in on them.

HELEN: Well, I don't care to get in with those drinkers.



VIOLET: Let's ask Mrs. Reed because they say she gives the swell parties in town.

HELEN: But, I don't know her.

VIOLET: Neither do I but let's ask her so we will get in on her parties.

HELEN: We'll have to have her to the luncheon then because she goes with Mrs. Riley and that crowd.

VIOLET: Should we plan to have this young group Thursday night?

Well, Monday and Tuesday nights are too soon; Wednesday night is that swell movie that's coming; Friday night there is always a dance; and Saturday night is a poor night.

Now, who is going to call up all these birds—they aren't friends of mine.

HELEN: You read the names again and we will divide them to suit ourselves.

VIOLET: Well, I won't take Mrs. Mooney or Mrs. Palmer. I can't stand either.

HELEN: Well, I'll take them, then. [*The rest of the names were allotted and then the discussion went on.*] The old ladies are the ones you have to be careful with. Some of them get so insulted if they are invited with some other women who are five or ten years older.

*October 9: the first party.*—To this event were invited "the younger crowd," a group of women under forty years of age who were not thought to be of great "social" importance.

While their guests were playing cards, Violet and Helen were in the kitchen discussing to whom they were to give invitations for the remaining parties. Many uncomplimentary remarks were made about their guests of the evening, it being evident throughout that this party and the second one were given because of a sense of duty, and that the third, a luncheon for the "four hundred," was the event to be stressed.

The matter of inviting Mrs. Peabody to the "swell party" became a point of friction. Mrs. Peabody is an "old woman" who is decidedly lacking qualifications which would classify



her with the "four hundred" but she is a close friend of Helen's.

VIOLET: We have thirty-six names here. I think we should try to divide them so we have no more than twenty at the luncheon.

HELEN: Well, I really must have Mrs. Peabody to the luncheon.

VIOLET: I don't see how we can manage that because if we have her to the luncheon that means we must have her crowd and that will make at least six tables and we can't entertain that many. In the first place, I don't think we are experienced enough in cooking to serve a luncheon to so many. And I haven't enough dishes and silverware.

HELEN: Well, we could take my dishes and silverware over there. I wouldn't hurt Mrs. Peabody for five parties. She is a good friend of mine, and helped me so when I had that operation.

VIOLET: Well, if we ask Mrs. Peabody to the luncheon then I feel that we should ask Mrs. Edgren. I consider her to be one of my best friends. Really though, Mrs. Shelley and Mrs. Peabody did not invite me to their party which they gave a year ago and so I am not indebted to them at all.

HELEN: Yes, and Mrs. Peabody will never get over the fact that they did not ask you.

VIOLET: Do you want to invite Mrs. Lilley? I know you went to her house.

I surely wouldn't invite her any place and I wouldn't go to her house. I think she is positively terrible and I know that she goes right after men and she charges \$10 a night. It is up to you to invite her if you want her, and it is also up to you to invite Mrs. Adams and Mrs. Austin. I won't. They have given a number of parties but never asked us. I know that they only entertain the "four hundred" and give big dinner parties and don't notice the rest of the people in town.

HELEN: Since we got no regrets for this party we still have Mrs. Mooney to invite.

*October 16.*—Again the two women discussed their forthcoming parties. Soon Mrs. Peabody and another bone of contention, Mrs. Austin, were excluded from the luncheon, as Violet wished. This was a serious matter, because when a series of parties is given, women feel keenly the stigma of

being invited to an ordinary party which takes place at night rather than to a luncheon. It is for this reason that Helen was reluctant to invite her friends, Mrs. Peabody and Mrs. Austin, to the night party.

With arrangements apparently made to the satisfaction of both, Violet departed.

Helen had come to this meeting prepared to insist upon inviting Mrs. Peabody to the luncheon if Violet suggested the presence of Mrs. Edgren. This is shown in her remarks after Violet's departure which were as follows:

HELEN: No, Violet didn't say a word about inviting Mrs. Edgren to the luncheon. If she had, believe me, I would have mentioned Mrs. Peabody. I don't like Mrs. Edgren or any of the family—they act so smart. They're all big "I" and little "you." She has given four parties in the last three years and she invited all our crowd to the first one but me, then to the second she invited me just the day before the party. I refused and she hasn't invited me since.

*October 19.*—Violet refused to confer regarding party arrangements, making the alibi that she was "too busy."

HELEN [*to her husband*]: I don't see why Violet can't come over.

I hate to decide anything without Violet because whatever I do she won't be satisfied.

I can't see why she is so anxious to have Mrs. Jameson to the luncheon and she wouldn't even invite Alicia Jellison because of her reputation and as far as I can see Mrs. Jameson's reputation isn't any better.

I heard that she and Mrs. Jameson were drunk when they were married and she is drunk at all the dances they go to.

Violet likes to be nice to the people in the "four hundred."

Then Helen telephoned to Violet of plans which she had decided upon. Violet replied with assumed indifference, "All right, but let me know what you finally decide. It makes no difference to me." At this remark Helen suggested that the parties be dropped. Violet agreed and the conversation ended. Later, however, she was the recipient of Violet's

pent-up wrath by telephone and reported Violet's stand as follows:

HELEN: Oh, she was mad! She said that it looked to her as if I was planning against her and the best thing for her to do would be to drop out. She was mad at first but I fixed things up and now I am to get these names straightened out and let her know about it. She said that since the luncheon is to be at her house that she would have the responsibility and she is going to hire a woman to help so she can't see why I am so against it. So I guess we will have the luncheon. Of course, I wanted a luncheon all the time because if one doesn't give luncheons she doesn't get invited to them, and the best crowd is usually at the luncheon. But I thought I'd rather hurt myself than to hurt Mrs. Peabody by inviting her to an ordinary night party when I was also giving a luncheon.

I think I should ask "Grandma Holmes." She will probably "regret" anyway since the party is at Violet's house and she isn't speaking to that family.

In a short time the names were given to Violet by telephone and both seemed to be satisfied.

*October 21.*—There was more discussion of the parties, in person and by telephone. Already two women had "regretted," making it necessary to secure substitutes. Helen was delegated to invite Mrs. Cooper, who had not been very friendly with Violet for some time. Reluctantly Helen invited the lady to the night party when she believed her to be worthy of the luncheon.

*October 22.*—Much time was spent in preparing for the party, some gossiping was done, Grandma Holmes's "regret" was evaluated.

*October 25: the second party.*—Theoretically this was an "old lady's party" primarily, but it served to include the cast-offs from the other parties as well. In fact, the assemblage was so heterogeneous that the feelings of many were hurt.

*November 15.*—A meeting called for the purpose of deciding upon the food to be served at the luncheon was devoted mainly to gossiping.

*November 20.*—The two hostesses spent the evening at Violet's home setting tables and preparing food for their luncheon. In addition to a great deal of discussion which arose out of the party arrangements, there was much gossiping.

*November 21: the luncheon.*—Twenty guests were present. Many compliments were offered on the excellence of the food. The guests appeared to have an unusually good time and the hostesses felt relieved because they would not feel obligated to entertain again for a year. Everybody in town was indebted to them! For the following year their chief "social" concerns were about failure to be invited to a party, an invitation with a "bum" crowd instead of with the "four hundred," etc.

This series of parties given by Violet and Helen reveals the high-pressure struggle for status which, for a large share of the women of the town, centers around bridge parties. Some of the women are more or less satisfied with the positions on the social ladder which they occupy and hence are not so eager to climb upward as Violet, but practically all jealously guard themselves from steps downward. Similarly, all Mineville women are not as frank as Violet and Helen, and surely some of them are much more charitable and less vindictive. But when giving a series of parties all of them tend to invite the same women to their luncheons and to distribute the remainder of their invitations among women in such a way that it is clear that they have the same machinery of social expediency in mind that was had by Violet and Helen.

In any case, a bridge party in Mineville with over twelve women in attendance is likely to include women of widely different positions on the social scale. So when a woman receives an invitation to such a party she often sets about to "find out who is going" in order that she may know in just what class she has been placed. If the particular "crowd" with which she has been classed disturbs her conception of her rôle seriously, she "regrets," that is, in feigned sorrow she telephones to the hostess that she has a "terrible headache" or her baby is "awfully sick" or she "just can't find anybody to take care of baby."

While the number of people in town at any particular level of the social ladder is too few for any active resident to confine his associations to that level, there are women who occasionally seem to delight in exaggerating the situation by inviting a conglomeration of women to the same party in order to disturb some of them. In one case, of twenty-four women present there were those strongly opposed to smoking and those who left the room in order to smoke; there were women who were passing out of middle age and girls who might easily have been their daughters; there were neat and well-dressed women and those whose odors betrayed their need of a bath and who were poorly groomed; and, finally, there were the conspicuously virtuous alongside their glaring antitheses. The hostess seemed to have thrown the ordinary criteria of status to the four winds but her guests were equal to the occasion. That each one was weighing the other carefully no outsider could have seen, for everyone seemed to have a spontaneous "good time." Still, on the way home, some of those who took one another into confidence said, "Wasn't that an odd bunch? I wouldn't have gone if I had known who would be there."



Mineville men seem to fall into intimate relations with one another under less strain than the women. With no thought of losing caste, the banker goes fishing with a bookkeeper; the physician gossips with an old prospector; and the lawyer munches sandwiches with miners at a meeting of the Redmen. Under such conditions one easily finds out that the other fellow is "not so bad after all" and class discriminations tend to be broken down. But this is not to say that class distinctions are not present, for, friendliness notwithstanding, Minevillers know too well the relative superiority and inferiority of the rôles one another play in the community life not to feel clearly the differences. Actually the different social levels of the people are very real, and sometimes quite rigid. Soon after a newcomer has arrived in town he is likely to find himself in the approximate place on the social scale which he will occupy permanently. There are many exceptions to this rule, but it expresses a strong tendency. The people say: "If you get off on the right foot when you first come to town, you are all right; but if you don't, it's hard to make people change their opinions of you." Some families have advanced far financially and yet have been able to move but little from their original ratings in the eyes of the community. The friendships and animosities they formed soon after they arrived in town have tended to be permanent and of far-reaching effect.

The personal factors which exert so strong an influence in determining the social positions of Mineville people are well shown in the tendency of families to secure traditional places, which they hold long after they have lost the financial positions or other sorts of eminence which had so much influence in giving them their original stations in the community. Because of the recognition these people secure in Mineville



they are often loath to leave town even though they might easily have more chance of financial success elsewhere.

But with all the factors which go to make social positions permanent, there is always a certain amount of shifting up and down the social ladder in Mineville. And, of course, it is usually the large shifts, and particularly those which are abrupt, that grasp the focus of community attention. Within the last few years, for instance, one of the home-boys has been somewhat unexpectedly becoming known as the "richest man in town." The community is fairly startled at being required to think of this unassuming local son as its leading financier. However, excepting those breath-taking shifts on the social ladder which have taken place when men have become wealthy overnight in the mining industry, the shifts in status which have most excited the community have generally been movements or threatened movements down the scale. These have come when respected residents have suddenly been found guilty of great wrongs such as murders, serious moral lapses, or embezzlements. In the year of 1930 Mineville was thrown into a state of excitement several times while lowering its estimate of persons. One man was so much affected by the change which his status was undergoing in the gristmill of public discussion that he secluded himself at home from the gaze of other persons for several weeks. People said of him: "He is lucky he pulled that stunt in a small town where people don't want to hurt him. In a city he would have been put in the penitentiary." But when he finally appeared on Main Street the comment was merely: "There is Mr. Jerome out at last. I wonder how he is going to earn a living now." He caused little excitement at that late date because people then took their lowered estimate of him for granted. His ill fame had become a matter of ancient history.

## CHAPTER IX<sup>1</sup>

### THE PRINTED PAGE

#### THE READING HABIT

According to an old-timer who came to town in 1871, there was very little reading in Mineville during pioneer days. "We got a weekly paper from Deer Creek, and then there was another we got from Melena. Some of the people had quite a few books, but, on the whole, there really wasn't much reading done." This situation changed during the early eighties, when daily stage service brought daily papers from larger neighboring towns.

Ninety-seven per cent of the people are English reading and some of the rest read in foreign languages. The principal

<sup>1</sup> One of the most important factors in modern society is that of preserving and circulating ideas by means of the printed page. Hence if we knew the complete story of the influence of the printed page upon the life of Mineville people we would know a great deal about the town. The schoolbooks, novels, magazines, and newspapers that the different residents have read account to a profound extent for their similarities and differences as persons. But to investigate the life reading-habits of every literate person in town is manifestly beyond our scope. In the first place, the materials that people read vary so much from time to time that most persons cannot tell briefly just what they read or have read. While to be sure they can give the names of periodicals, there is a wide range of choice of material in so many of these which is selected according to the moods of the moment that their influences can only be guessed. Even when a periodical deals with but one type of material we would find it is necessary to discover its influence upon the particular person, if we are to reach the intimate plane which we are attempting in this study. Such a task could only be achieved poorly by a corps of psychologists and psychiatrists. And then, even if we knew the influence of a particular sort of reading matter upon those persons who read it we would not know its effect upon the community, for ideas and news of all sorts, once read, circulate through the town readily by means of gossip.

reading material of the majority of the people has always been the newspaper, but magazine reading has grown by leaps and bounds during the past quarter of a century. Fifteen years ago a Mineville druggist sold a few magazines incidentally. Now, although the town has not gained in size, there are two news stands in vigorous competition with each other, and the postmaster states that the number of magazines sold by subscription has increased similarly. Whether or not small-town conditions foster an unusual amount of reading we cannot say. At any rate, complaints such as the following are everyday occurrences in Mineville: "A fellow would go crazy if he couldn't read in a dead town like this because there's nothing else to do most of the time"; or "Reading is the only thing a sensible poor man can afford and depend upon in this damned town."

Still there are to be found surprising numbers of persons who testify that they "practically never read excepting to glance over the headlines of the newspaper," and some of these are among the most prominent citizens. Typical reasons given for not reading are: "I'm too busy"; "By the time I use my eyes all day at my work they are exhausted"; "I'm too tired when I get home from work"; "I prefer to take the car and go for a spin in the fresh air after being penned up all day"; "I never did like to read"; "I used to read lots but somehow I've lost interest"; "I used to read when I was young but my eyes have gone back on me of late years."

But those who read little or none are ordinarily quite well informed and quite apace with the times in regard to the common topics of interest in the United States. For there is a general tendency of the people of Mineville to profit by the reading of one another. "I see by the paper," says one of them, and then he proceeds to tell another what

he has read, which virtually means that he is throwing it open for public discussion since his hearers characteristically pass the information to others. In this way a new slant on a live issue perchance read by but one person easily attains wide circulation—even to the illiterate. With fifteen hundred people dividing their attention among two hundred and fifty different periodicals and pooling the resources of their reading, it is not strange that some Minevillers have been led to believe that Minevillers as a whole are better informed than the same class of city people. In this wholesale exchange of results of reading, certain intelligent and inveterate readers may be counted upon to do a lion's share of the reading and thinking in the community. The average Mineviller perhaps seldom if ever stops to think of the large amount of his information that is secured second hand. Still less does he realize how much of it comes from prodigious readers like Chet Hayes, who enjoys exhibiting the breadth of his reading in an exchange center of information such as Marshall's Tailor Shop.

#### THE WEEKLY PAPER

The weekly *Mineville Mail* is the only newspaper printed in the county. Its total circulation of 1,105 is distributed as shown in Table VII. These figures show that the paper goes to about seven-eighths of the homes in the Mineville district and to about five-eighths of those in the remainder of the county. Then there are over one-third as many subscribers in other counties in the state as in Mineville itself, and a still higher ratio distributed among 25 states, 2 Canadian provinces, and 3 foreign countries. Truly Mineville has a widespread community consciousness, for the great majority of these subscribers have a profound personal interest in the

town—only 33 of them being libraries, colleges, advertising firms, and other newspapers. In fact, only those former residents who have an abiding desire to follow the intimate life of the town tend to subscribe for the *Mail*, and such persons read the paper with far more interest than present residents who unavoidably encounter so much of the news by

TABLE VII

Mineville and vicinity . . . . .	490	Nevada . . . . .	2
Remainder of county . . . . .	222	Michigan . . . . .	2
Remainder of the state . . . . .	182	South Dakota . . . . .	2
Washington (state) . . . . .	48	Indiana . . . . .	2
California . . . . .	42	Oklahoma . . . . .	2
Idaho . . . . .	17	Nebraska . . . . .	2
Oregon . . . . .	14	Maine . . . . .	2
New York . . . . .	11	Tennessee . . . . .	2
Missouri . . . . .	9	Ohio . . . . .	1
Pennsylvania . . . . .	6	North Dakota . . . . .	1
Illinois . . . . .	5	Texas . . . . .	1
Colorado . . . . .	4	Washington, D.C. . . . .	2
Virginia . . . . .	4	British Columbia . . . . .	3
Minnesota . . . . .	4	Ontario . . . . .	2
Massachusetts . . . . .	3	Philippines . . . . .	1
Iowa . . . . .	3	Finland . . . . .	1
Utah . . . . .	2	Mexico . . . . .	1

direct contact or by way of gossip. If they chance to live in a large city where there are a number of former Minevillers, a telephoning bee is at once started when a striking bit of news appears in the little weekly, and the information is quickly spread to non-subscribers. In this way many persons who have no one in Mineville with whom they correspond keep in regular touch with the destinies of the little town even though they may have departed over a quarter of a century ago.



Advertising in the *Mail* is conducted for the most part by Mineville stores and by national concerns such as the Ford Motor Company. Merchants in neighboring hamlets in the county rarely use the paper as an advertising medium. The people in those parts of the county are mildly interested in the Mineville news which dominates the pages of the *Mail*, but tend to subscribe for it mainly because it is a county organ containing official notices for the entire county and because it has columns of personal-news items about themselves.

The typical issue of the *Mail* contains eight six-column pages, and its typical reader will be seen obviously searching for personal news by the process of perusing the first and last pages thoroughly and then hastily glancing over those intervening for chance bits of personal news for which the editor sometimes cannot find room on the two principal pages. On the first page are found columns of Hay and Junction news, lengthy obituaries, descriptions of weddings, discussions of the mining situation in Mineville, lists of new officers of fraternal orders and other organizations, reports of the board of county commissioners which fill a third of the page, announcements of home-talent entertainments given or to be given, and many local items of one to three sentences each. On the last page are advertisements and columns of the brief personal items, while the second page carries the miscellaneous residue from the cover pages with a statement of the founding of the paper in 1887 and of its present editorship but with no suggestion of an editorial column. Then the remainder of the paper is generally given mainly to a conglomeration of county legal notices and to stereotyped boiler-plate articles about the romantic past or present of the state such as are printed by small-town



papers throughout the state—plus odd articles upon history, invention, politics, crime, and the like which would make interesting reading material in the absence of competition furnished by the city daily papers.

Such is an external view of the *Mail*, on the basis of which strangers and sophisticated Minevillers might seem justified in rating it as childish and amusing. But anyone who thoroughly identifies himself with the community achieves an inside view and frankly enjoys some parts of the paper—even though he may express disgust or jest about it nearly every week. Blunt notices of sickness, births, deaths, or even of weekly trips to town by ranchers teem with interest to those who truly appreciate the drama of humanity and have adequate insight into the personalities involved. An item may read "John Hills has been confined to his home with a bad cold." And, if the resident reader has not already learned of John's illness by way of gossip, this bare news statement may awaken myriad associations such as that John's lungs are so weak that great care must be taken in treating the ailment; that he is in debt and cannot well afford to miss work; that his wife is in poor health and unable to bear the burden of caring for a sick man; that he will not be at the next meeting of the Redmen; or that he has not been looking well lately.

One of the best proofs that the people of Mineville enjoy their paper is shown in the way they complain when they do not see it. Nevertheless, more often than not the average Mineviller, upon having perused the much-abused little paper, says, "As usual there's not a blessed thing in that fool paper—not a blessed thing!" Note the following criticism from a leading citizen:

I'll tell you what we need here and that is a live newspaper. I'd like to be running that paper. I'd make it play a vital part in the life of the community.

What good is that paper anyhow?

Yes, I know it is interesting when one is out of town because I used to go to the library every week in Gold in order to see it, and then I often had to wait because someone else had it.

In these days when the editors of papers do the thinking for the people it is the duty of even a small-town paper to do its part.

I even believe he could print scandals and get away with it. Do you remember years ago when we had two papers and the *Crystal County News* was printing denunciations of Fred Waldron's relations with women? Why the people couldn't wait for their papers while that scandal was going on. Everybody had to see both papers each week.

But apparently this leading citizen has forgotten the storm of criticism which was directed toward the editor of the *News*. After all, it seems that the editor of the *Mail* was not far wrong when he said: "If I printed the really interesting news in this town I would be run out of town. It would be a snap to put out the paper if I could print scandal news but that stuff doesn't go in a small-town paper."

But what a force for social control it would be if the *Mail* could portray lurid details as do city papers! In view of the importance of personal status in the town a great deal of the present lack of restraint would be removed since having one's conduct heralded in print is enormously more effective than even a well-founded notion that "the gossips are talking about it." However, assuming that such a paper could exist, there might be some dispute as to whether the end would justify the means unless placed in the hands of a very tactful, honorable, and intelligent editor.

The editor cannot afford the expense of an extensive staff of paid reporters, and so he limits himself to those in Hay

and Junction because he can depend upon gossip and voluntary reporters for almost all of his Mineville news. In the ordinary course of conversation with his fellow-residents he secures many a hunch which he need only verify before printing, and many persons seem to delight in giving him information—particularly of their own families. But because such news is already somewhat in circulation and because gossip can travel so rapidly, it is not surprising that he and his printer experience a “thrill” whenever they secure an exceptionally live “scoop” which has not already attained wide publicity before their paper appears.

Strange as it may seem, the editor of the *Mail*, like the editor of a city daily, must constantly be thinking of the taste of his public. He must not antagonize anyone lest pressure be brought which will cause him to lose his largest source of income—the county official printing. Or, if he prints anything which is not flattering or neutral, someone takes his action as a personal affront and he lives to suffer for his deed. So, in order to keep his peace of mind, and maintain the existence of his paper, he has no editorial column, and prints neither scandal nor anything else upon which there is not virtual unanimity of opinion in the community. To a large extent he is obliged to print dry or semi-dry facts from which the people can draw their own conclusions. Even were his paper a daily, he could not pretend to offer serious competition to gossip insofar as the most interesting local news which he is free to print is concerned. So rapidly does such news circulate that he can only hope to add to it definiteness or detail. The fluidity of gossip thus does much to reduce the interest which the people have in his paper and acts as a partial substitute for a local daily.

## THE CITY DAILY PAPERS

City daily newspapers comprise the principal reading matter in the community. There is a wide variety of these from far and near, but the *Western Standard*, a twenty-page daily from Gold, is read by nearly everyone.

The *Standard*, a morning paper, arrives in Mineville on the train that is due at noon. In circulation it reaches most of the homes in town, there being, on week days, 200 copies sent by mail, 65 copies sold at a news stand, and 70 copies delivered by carrier. In all, this makes 335 copies, of which 22 are delivered over the farming district by the R.F.D. carrier while a few more are received at the post-office by farmers who make daily contact with Mineville by automobile. On Sunday the sales are even higher—approximately 400 being disposed of.

Next highest in sales is the *Gold Daily Post*, an evening paper, 64 copies of which are brought to town by the bus at about 7:00 P.M. Besides the *Post*, other noteworthy home state papers found are the *Melena Record Herald*, *Melena Independent*, *Daily Glenviewan*, and *Glenview Sentinel*, which have circulations varying from 5 to 20.<sup>1</sup>

Daily papers from outside the state are numerous, but their circulations are very small—ranging from 1 to 5 or 6. In this list are found dailies from New York, Boston, Chicago, St. Louis, Minneapolis, Denver, Spokane, Seattle, Portland (Ore.), San Francisco, and Los Angeles.

## MAGAZINES

There seems to be no reason to assume that the magazine-reading taste of Minevillers is much different from that of

<sup>1</sup> All these home state papers are controlled by the Standard Copper Co. Some implications of that state of affairs are suggested on p. 67.

an average sample of the people of the United States composed of the same number of persons. Mineville has its select few who read the *American Mercury*, the *Forum*, *World's Work*, *Harper's*, and the *National Geographic*; it has its great rank and file who read magazines such as the *American Magazine*, *Saturday Evening Post*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, and *Woman's Home Companion*; and at the other end of the scale it has the usual large number of readers of magazines tinged with sex, from *True Story* to *Eye Opener* and *Jim Jam Jems*. Then among professional journals there are those common everywhere to the physician, the dentist, the mining engineer, the teacher, the druggist, the printer, etc.; and there are many farm journals, all of which come by mail. The postmaster estimates that the total number of different periodicals received (not necessarily read) in the community reaches a staggering total of between 250 and 500.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A list of the combined magazine sales of Mineville's two news stands gives the impression of a veritable "rogues' gallery": 60 copies of *True Story*; 35 copies of *True Romances*; 26 copies of the *American Magazine*; 15 copies of *Dream World*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Red Book*; 14 copies of *Western*; 12 copies of *West*, *McCall's*, *Woman's Home Companion*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Ranch Romances*, and *True Detective Stories*; 10 copies of *Saturday Evening Post*, *Liberty*, *Pictorial Review*, *Delineator*, *Photoplay*, and *Collier's*; 9 copies of *Ace High*; 8 copies of *Jim Jam Jems*; 7 copies of *Five Novels*, *Physical Culture*, and *College Life*; 6 copies of *Child Life*, *Forest and Stream*, *College Humor*, *Breezy Stories*, *Cowboy Stories*, *Short Stories*, and *Eye Opener*; 5 copies of *Real Detective Stories*, *Wild West Weekly*, *Modern Mechanics*, and *Air Stories*; 4 copies of *Field Stories*, *Fur-Fish-Game*, *Smart Set*, *Mics 1930*, *Fashionable Dress*, *Priscilla*, *Reader's Digest*, *Astounding Stories*, *I Confess*, *Ghost Stories*, *True Confessions*, *Love Story*, and *Radio Bulletin*; 3 copies of *Brief Stories*, *Film Fun*, *Action Stories*, *Lariat*, *Complete Story*, *Triplex*, *True Experiences*, and *Real Detective Tales*; 2 copies of *Broadcast Weekly*, *The Gumps*, *Keeping Up with the Joneses*, *Needlecraft*, *Aces*, *Detective Classics*, *Aeronautics*, *War Stories*, *Fight Stories*, *Marriage Stories*, *Smoke House*, *War Novels*, *Love and Romance*, *Flyers*, *Amazing Stories*, *Sunset*, *Time*, *Sports Digest*, *National*



The more "sensible" Minevillers tend to be subscribers, while those who seek trash are more prone to patronize the news stands.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes these "sensible" folks, however, have distinguished themselves as easy victims of magazine agents. But of late the word soon gets passed around that one or several magazine agents are canvassing the town and the people have time to prepare to say "No" when approached. For too many magazine agents have exploited Minevillers under the false pretense that they were working their way through college and too many others have collected money without delivering the magazines.

#### BOOKS AND THE LIBRARY

Those Minevillers whose reading extends beyond the newspaper tend to seek magazines rather than books. Nevertheless there is much reading of books. When not purchased or borrowed from someone else, they are usually secured from the State University Circulating Library, the

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*Sports, Motion Picture Classic, Elite Styles, Vogue Pattern Book, Vogue, Style, McCall Quarterly, Pictorial Review Quarterly, Etude, Blue Book, Science Wonder Stories, Railroad Man's Magazine, Harper's, Underworld, Detective Stories, Plain Talk, Pathfinder, Beef, Clues, Detective, Review of Reviews, Ladies' Home Journal, Police Gazette, Hunting and Fishing, Mid-week Pictorial, Detective Novel, Detective Adventures; and 24 other magazines of which 1 copy is sold besides 21 magazines which are rarely sold.*

<sup>1</sup> A rather exceptional case which illustrates the kinds of periodicals which the "sensible" people read, and most of which are not found in the local news stands, is the following list going to one Mineville home: *National Geographic Mining Journal, Mining and Engineering Journal, Collier's, Review of Reviews, Nation's Business, Cosmopolitan, People's Popular Monthly, Good Housekeeping, Household Magazine, Farm and Fireside, Farm Journal, Correct Eating, Pacific Echo (Woodcraft), New Age (Masonic), Western Mason, Western Woman (Woman's Club), Presbyterian Reporter, Unity Magazine, Northwestern Chronicle (Catholic weekly), Rotarian, Cloverleaf Review, Western Standard, Melena Record-Herald, and Mineville Mail.*



public libraries in larger neighboring cities, the Mineville Public Library, the high- and grade-school libraries, or the rental library conducted by a Main Street confectioner.

The Mineville Public Library is maintained by a group of volunteer women. It is open three evenings of each week and the average number of books drawn per evening is twenty-five. These are almost entirely fiction and are drawn principally by children. Adults rarely think of using the library for reference purposes, and those seeking fiction are most likely to patronize the rental library at which some of the latest novels are to be had.

Book agents, as a rule, do not prosper unusually in Mineville unless they are selling sets which serve as reference books for children. The appeal that a purchase will greatly aid the children in their school work readily induces parents, "who don't own another book," to buy expensive sets. Once a set is sold to an influential parent, the agent's prosperity is assured, for other parents do not wish to deny their children the advantages which the agent says Mr. "So-and-So" is progressive enough to provide for his children.

"Book of the Month" clubs have a number of members in town; and the more-talked-of books are sometimes reviewed at the Woman's Club; but the only organized interest in them is in the Deep Thinkers' Club, which is composed of a handful of men who meet on each fortnight.

Occasionally privately owned books have a tendency to become "the rage" and to go from hand to hand until they have been read by many people. *An American Tragedy* and *Strange Interlude* were in this class because "the best people" were discussing them. In its day *Main Street* was widely read but aroused no unusual criticism. Apparently Minevillers had the common sense to know that Sinclair Lewis

did not pretend to be drawing a picture of a typical small town. For, despite many similarities between Mineville and Lewis' Gopher Prairie, the differences were so great that Minevillers could not easily think that he intended to do otherwise than to portray particular characters in a particular small town—with emphasis upon the characters rather than upon the town.

## CHAPTER X

### LAW ENFORCEMENT

#### THE TOWN POLICEMAN

The office of "chief of police" of Mineville was declared indefinitely vacant in 1930 by the City Council. The immediate cause of this action was that the sheriff and undersheriff were making nearly all of the arrests in town and thus money from fines which should have gone into the coffers of the city treasury was going to the county. An added factor was that the money of the policeman's salary promised to come in very handy in purchasing a new Ford truck to replace the City Water Department's long-dilapidated Model T. But the underlying basis of the chief's dismissal was that public opinion had grown to consider him unnecessary. Indeed, for many years the town policeman had been well-nigh a figure-head whose lack of zeal in performing his duties made him little feared. Whether because of laziness, fear of incurring the enmity of the offender and his sympathizers, or from a natural inclination to favor the lawbreaking group from which he had often been chosen, he typically did little more than to shut off the water when a citizen's water rent was long overdue, to act as dog- and cow-catcher, to ring the curfew at nine o'clock, and to arrest an occasional offender when public opinion had forced him to do so.

Only during boom periods has Mineville had much need for a policeman, unless the sheriff and undersheriff were laggards or incompetents; but by tradition the town has nearly always had one. Even after public opinion had decided that

the last incumbent was unnecessary, he took advantage of the personal basis of social relations and delayed his retirement for many months by merely being present at meetings of the City Council at the city hall. Finally, in desperation, the mayor surprised the chief by calling a special meeting at the courthouse at which the genial and popular fellow was quietly relieved of his office, without causing the mayor and aldermen the embarrassment of discussing his demerits in his presence.

#### THE SHERIFF

The present sheriff is generally conceded to be the "best" in the history of the county. He is courageous and energetic and takes his duties very seriously. But his hands are tied by a public which quickly and definitely determines his police power, and by discouraging defeats of justice in courts after he has worked long and hard to make an arrest. Actual conditions constantly remind him that in the long run laws must be backed by public opinion if they are to be enforceable. As he has said:

Laws are broken right under your nose in this community, but what is there to be done about it? It does no good for me to try to stop gambling because if I arrest the fellows the court turns them loose, and if I stop a game the fellows only go some place else such as a hotel room. Since the public isn't behind the law, the only thing for me to do is to let the fellows gamble but to make them do it on the square. I will enforce any law that the people want enforced. I can do no more.

Only six years previously, the man who spoke these words had been the defendant in a sensational trial on a charge of bootlegging. The stigma of that charge, however, has almost entirely left him, so well has he performed his duties as sheriff.

## PROHIBITION AND ALLIED PROBLEMS

The intimacy which is an unmistakable deterrent to some lawbreaking in Mineville also gives rise to peculiar difficulties for police officers. Certain of these phenomena are clearly manifest in connection with the most glaring enforcement problem in the community: prohibition.

Largely as a protest against the national Prohibition Law, the people of the state repealed their state Prohibition Law in 1928. Since then the weight of enforcement has been placed entirely upon federal officers without any disadvantage because the local officers gave practically no assistance when they were empowered to do so, owing to the factors of intimacy and to their dependence upon the little public for their jobs. But the federal officers are quite otherwise. Having scant need for the personal good will of Mineville people, and being required to make arrests if they are to have good records at headquarters, these outsiders ruthlessly pounce upon the unsuspecting trafficker in unlawful drink and arrest him. That is why "hardboiled" and defiant Mineville bartenders are suddenly transformed into nervous dispensers of genuine soft drinks when the presence of "federal men" is rumored, whereas they serve unlawful drinks to a local police officer as nonchalantly as to any other citizen.

Mineville is a very wet community. In 1928 it showed its opposition to the national Prohibition Law by voting over two to one for the repeal of the state Prohibition Law. It harbors three prosperous "moonshine joints" and a number of curb dispensers of liquor. Its residents produce an astonishing amount of home brew. One local hardware store alone sold over twenty-two thousand bottle caps in 1928, and many thousands more were purchased from mail-order houses. A man who is in a position to know (by sight or

smell), estimates that 95 per cent of the homes have liquor on hand for beverage purposes.

There is no secrecy about the vocations of the "moonshiners" and "bootleggers" in Mineville. They are recognized as frankly by their vocations as are miners or carpenters. Some of them stand out as leaders to a large share of the people. Not a few men testify that they would go into the same business if they had the courage to face its dangers. The proprietor of the main moonshine joint recently moved into one of the finest houses in town—a house which became known as "the moonshine bungalow" a few years ago when occupied by another bootlegger. Both of these men have good reputations. Of the present resident in the bungalow a common expression is:

If everybody in town was as generous and honest as Ace Laylor, we wouldn't have much to kick about in this town. Ace is always willing to help every good cause, and instead of always trying to be crooked like some of the people in town who are supposed to be respectable, Ace is always helping somebody.

And this statement is no exaggeration. The tendency of men in the disreputable liquor business to compensate by being more honorable than some of the lawyers and others in traditionally respected pursuits was noticeable even in the days of the saloon. This is not to say, however, that a few of the saloonkeepers and gamblers were not known to be outrageously "crooked," and that some of the gamblers of today do not have very shady reputations for their lack of honesty. How much such men contribute to good causes because of the purely mercenary desire to buy the good will of the people no one knows, but it is noteworthy that they are never accused of contributing because of unworthy motives.



In order to avoid federal officers, stills are generally operated in secluded spots in the surrounding mountainous country. Many natives know the general locations of these stills. Little secrecy need be made about them because the more active part of local public opinion is in favor of drink and is very eager to give warning of the approach of prohibition-enforcement officers. The moonshiner's confidence in public support is shown in the case of Al Egbert. Al had been taken before a federal judge at Glenview by enforcement officers. A few days later, while under heavy bail, he openly admitted to a group of men (one of whom was a known "dry") that he had not discontinued his operations and that his presence in town was to be explained by the fact that he had a man working "in a cabin out in the hills" during hours of darkness.

Men like Egbert and Sanderson are on the "inner circle" and are able to keep out competition. The quality of their "moon" has made for them a reputation which gives them the support of the retailers. Thus the "little fellow" finds many forces against him. The case of "Serious Eddie" is illustrative. Eddie wished to make a living at work which was within his physical powers and so he took up moonshining. His story is:

I haven't worked a tap for three weeks. I was haying but it nearly broke me down. By the time a fellow has been around this world for sixty years he ain't what he used to be when it comes to work. I've done lots of hard work in my time. Before I went haying I was moonshining but I was wised up that if I didn't look out I would find myself in the penitentiary because I had no one to go bail for me if I got caught. It was pretty plain that I was going to be the goat if I didn't stop, and so I left and went haying.

But that wasn't the first time I was on the short end of things. You know, for a while I was making booze at my house and these

bootleg joints on Main Street would get a man drunk and then tell him to go up around Serious Eddie's place and sober up. That made it look bad for me but I couldn't do anything about it. But somehow I never was arrested in a liquor case. Several times I had just left when a place was "pulled." Luck seemed to be with me, but I told myself that the time would come when things would turn against me and so I quit the booze racket.

The proprietors of the "moonshine joints" reap large profits from liquor sales because they pay the "moonshiner" a comparatively low price for his product. All of them have been "caught" by federal officers several times. Three proprietors have been driven out of business permanently because their wives objected to the stigma of being "moonshiners' wives"; because of actual, threatened, or suspended sentences in the state penitentiary; or because they sought a more peaceful and respectful life after having made small fortunes. But while in the business the men boldly put on a front of defiance. One of them was padlocked on an evening and was doing business in a building in the next block on the following morning. With almost equal rapidity two "joints" that were padlocked in a recent raid were reopened. Even the fact that a proprietor was serving sixty days in the state penitentiary did not prevent his business from being carried on.

The hectic and hounded lives of the proprietors or bartenders of the "joints" are made easier by their large and energetic supporting body of the public. But as alert as are the many wets to warn chief offenders that "the federal men are coming," their effect may be counteracted of late by local prohibitionists. Carrying on secret correspondence with the federal enforcement officer of the district, prohibitionists are suspected of suggesting the most advisable times and

modes of attack so that the violators may be caught "with the goods." The zeal of these unknown informants of the federal officers is well suggested in the case of a leading worker in one of the churches, who avowed:

If I thought it would do any good I would take an ax and break the windows and mirrors in those drinking places. I'm that mad at them!

And I think the gamblers should be lined up and shot down. Why there is a fellow down at the Pacific rooming-house who never works and who is taking more and more money away from the fools who will play with him. Mrs. McCammon says he has a great roll of bills.

But there are not many people in the community who hazard their popularity by frankly upholding prohibition. The man who is, perhaps, the most courageous "dry" antagonized a large part of the public when he proposed that the city government, which is in a very weak financial condition, should derive revenue from "moonshine joints." He said:

Money could be raised easily by declaring the "moonshine joints" to be public nuisances and then making them furnish a bond which they would forfeit regularly. Since the people are disposed to tolerate such businesses I think we should at least derive a substantial revenue from them instead of having our water rent raised.

There is only one reason why that program didn't get through the City Council and that is because we have several members of the Council who think it is all right to sell and drink all the booze they please.

Such a proposal did not involve anything untried in Mineville's past. Long before moonshiners appeared upon the scene the "taxing" of other trades of questionable reputation was one of the principal sources of revenue for the city government. In the words of a former policeman:

I was city marshal in 190—. That was some job! I used to serve a warrant on the gamblers and sporting girls each month and they always forfeited their bail. That meant quite a little piece of money for the city because sporting girls had to put up \$7.50 and gamblers \$12.50.

There were never many girls in my term—only from seventeen to twenty-five—but before my time Jack Hastings used to collect from eighty-three of them.

But no revenue has been secured from prostitutes since the passing of the redlight district in 1917, and it is over two decades ago since gamblers were taxed.

The laws against gambling are even more poorly enforced than prohibition. Gambling is virtually accepted as an inevitable vice. Those who favor it are vigorous and aggressive, and opponents are loath to “get mixed up in that sort of stuff” to the extent of displaying open resistance. The police merely require that games be conducted in inconspicuous places and that they be “on the square.”

Most of the gambling in town is done in the back rooms of the “moonshine joints” and pool halls. The largest games are conducted in Laylor’s place, but large amounts of money also change hands in private games in the hotel and in rooming-houses. And true to the gambling urge, the winners in Mineville go to Gold, where they lose in larger and more “crooked” games.

On the smaller end of the gambling business are the punch boards, which have long been illegal in the state and which have been suppressed a number of times only to appear again after a few months. Their present stay has been of several years’ duration and gives no indication of subsiding.

#### OTHER PROBLEMS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

In following the normal course of duty the Mineville police officer inevitably makes personal enemies who will re-

main hostile for many years. He is obliged to arrest persons he has known over a long period if not for a lifetime. These people are disposed to expect him to grant them liberties, and they are inclined to take arrest as a personal affront. He is expected frankly to show his preference for not arresting people by trying to take the intoxicated or disturbing townsman home, or by striving to convince him that he must go home or make himself inconspicuous. But other things being equal, the individual's likelihood of arrest increases as his social prominence decreases—the particular local persons most likely to be arrested being a group of repeaters who have worn out the patience of the police and of the public. Occasionally, however, a resident even becomes adjudged to be so much a public nuisance that he is “run out of town.”

Since the closing of the redlight district, arrests of women have been rare in Mineville. Police and townsfolk alike combine to protect the woman offender from the stigma of incarceration in the jail. The sheriff, for example, is expected to take an intoxicated woman home and to say nothing about it—as he not infrequently does.

Public opinion also requires that the sheriff settle cases of juvenile delinquency outside of court quickly and quietly, whenever the offender's reputation promises to suffer out of proportion to the seriousness of the offense. The recent robbery at the grade school is illustrative. From an electric iron the sheriff had secured the fingerprints of the guilty youngster with the intention of fingerprinting all of the 250-odd grade-school children, by which process apprehension was certain. But after his preliminary skirmishes he dropped the matter, judging that the guilty one had been sufficiently punished by having for several weeks nervously expected the wholesale fingerprinting to take place. There was no other rational alternative for the officer since people had



been saying: "Some poor kid's reputation will be ruined for life if those fingerprints are taken." With consummate skill the sheriff is required to decide when and when not to press such a case. He must consider the law, the justice to the individual, and the demand of the public in any particular instance. His responsibility is greatly increased by the fact that he must act as unofficial judge, but the requirement is considered to be humane and reasonable in this community in which it is so difficult for one to live down shady past deeds.

Of all offenders the stranger is most readily arrested because there is a community antagonism against "outsiders who think they can do as they 'damned' please in this town." But even he is usually given an opportunity to "get out of town," since there is unpleasant notoriety for the police officer in making an arrest, the walk to the jail involves the climbing of a steep hill, and the sheriff's wife is obliged to cook meals for prisoners—a task which she prefers to avoid, for the most part.

For a year (1929-30) the sheriff's wife had steady boarders in the persons of two young strangers who were sentenced to a year in the county jail for brutally beating other men in a box car. These prisoners were allowed to play with the children of the neighborhood for a period of four hours each day. Owing to this kind treatment, there has been criticism that the sheriff is "too nice" to his prisoners. There seems to be no good reason for assuming that this last is true even though certain young fellows speak gleefully of "being put into the 'can' where a guy gets a good square meal for a change." Such young fellows generally are locked up because of drunkenness, a condition which they consider a prerequisite to a "good time" at a dance. They constitute one



of the largest problems of the sheriff and represent most of his arrests, for public opinion demands that he do something to prevent drunkenness at dances.

In recent years there has been no case which has better brought out the peculiar problems of law enforcement in the community than that which arose out of an attempt to enforce traffic regulations issued by the City Council early in 1929. These regulations were devised as a result of a long-felt need, over three hundred dollars being spent in having them printed. Purchase of copies of them with a license to drive an automobile within the city limits was made obligatory at a price of one dollar per driver. But some persons steadfastly refused to part with the dollar—claiming that the levy was unwarranted—and no steps were taken to coerce them. Then, to cap the climax, non-observance of traffic regulations continued unabated, excepting a period of about a month when a few persons were more cautious than usual.

The consensus of opinion was that some of the traffic rules should be observed, but there was a tendency for each driver to propose that the other fellow tread the straight and narrow path while he be allowed liberties. It was pointed out that leading citizens continued to race along Main Street at a speed of fifty miles an hour to the terror of timid motorists and pedestrians. Alderman Dasset, who helped to frame the regulations, even drove at that speed on the wrong side of the street. The police, sensing the strength of the opposition, refused to take action against violators who included some of their best friends. As a result it was necessary to employ a special traffic officer on a commission basis even though the regular officers were in no sense overworked. This man secured two and a half dollars from each fine of

five dollars. For several days he plagued motorists but did not have the courage to attempt an arrest of Alderman Dasset, who was one of his bosses. All the while he was arresting others until he encountered a very obstinate individual who refused to be arrested until Dasset and a certain prominent citizen were also brought into police court. Whereupon, he removed his badge in a storm of oaths and no applicants for his unpopular position were forthcoming.

Two years later found the City Council still bent upon enforcing its traffic regulations and the majority of the people still complaining of the careless driving on Main Street. But with the reluctance of officers to treat their friends as criminals and to arrest persons whose prominence in the community makes their good will valuable, an insurmountable obstacle appears to exist for the present. A rather sage Mineviller said:

Someone is going to get hurt on Main Street yet. The chances are that someone will have to be killed before the people will wake up, and if someone gets killed I hope that a reckless prominent citizen like Ryan does the killing because things will be sure to change then. If an ordinary dub did it the people might forget.

In view of the many peculiar difficulties which are caused by the intimacy of police officers with the public, it might be suggested that small towns should be policed by a rotating force of strangers, none of whom would be stationed in one town long enough to lose their effectiveness because of having cultivated personal bonds with the residents. Theoretically such strangers would be biased neither by friendships nor by enmities. But it will be observed that a stranger would not be able to act so efficiently in the valuable rôle of informal arbiter as does the present Mineville-born sheriff

who has a knowledge of the personal backgrounds of practically everyone in the community.

All officers (not only the police) have a certain amount of laws to enforce, and all encounter an obstacle in the personal bearings of dealings which, in theory, are conducted upon a strictly business basis. The policy of the city treasurer and water collector reflects this tendency very well. After an excited woman paid him some money he said:

That woman just gave me \$50 for water rent. She was behind a few months and when I tackled her husband he got huffy and told me I could turn the water off if I wanted to, and so I had Mike turn it off. But people can't get along without water. I have a strangle hold on all of them and I always win out in the end. You see she gave me \$50 and that pays up her old bill and pays for a year in advance. She's just making up with me, you see.

She would have had no trouble at all if her husband hadn't lost his head, because I would have allowed her to pay in instalments even though I am supposed to turn off the water after a bill is ten days past due. You see it wouldn't do to follow the law to the letter and it would make a lot of hard feelings. Everybody has to have water and there have been only two or three cases where I have failed to collect if I gave enough time. Often they get sore and tell me I can shut off the damned water but I seldom do it because I know they will be around to pay me in time.

No, I'm not busy excepting in the first ten days of the month. Often at that time you will find me making special trips to people who owe water rent. I'm not supposed to do that but I think it is the only fair way to find out whether they are able to pay at once or not. Really, I'm supposed to shut them off after ten days. I carry them and they pay up in time.

Minevillers are inclined to take for granted that a local public officer will be reluctant to enforce the law "to the letter" if someone's feelings may be hurt. They take advantage of this reluctance and cause him much trouble. "Give them an inch and they take a mile," the officers say. In the

community quarantine of 1928, for instance, the order was that no congregations of people were to be permitted anywhere in town. This closed schools, churches, the dance hall, the show, and all formal gatherings. In order not to interfere too much with the regular routine of life, the mayor and the health officer thought it best to permit the stores, pool halls, and "moonshine joints" to be open, on condition that not more than a few persons would be in them at one time and that these would transact their business at once and leave. The people as a whole did not object. The majority were uneasy because of their fear of meningitis and sincerely wished that the quarantine be enforced. But little by little various persons, perhaps spontaneously, tested the rigidity of the law. They ventured to congregate in larger and larger groups until, with hardly a day passed, there was conspicuous breaking of the law by men in one "moonshine joint," in one pool hall, and in gossiping centers along Main Street. When a conscientious pool-hall proprietor refused to permit some boys to play pool on his tables they said, "We'll go to Kelly's"—his competitor's establishment. He and many other citizens complained privately, but no one cared to "get into a mess" by making a formal and open protest against specific lawbreakers. Even the problem of church and state asserted itself! The three resident clergymen were up in arms. They favored a quarantine but they refused to comply with a regulation which permitted people to congregate in pool halls and "moonshine joints" but closed "houses of God." One of them went so far as to threaten to expose the mayor's infamy in the press throughout the state.

In the end the defiant and aggressive minority won, as it so often does in Mineville. And the town was most fortunate that premature raising of the quarantine did not bring seri-

ous results. While the well-meaning mayor was becoming adjusted to the shortsightedness and lack of zeal of the people he said:

We'll take the quarantine off but I'll be damned if I'll ever put it on again. This damned job of mine is full of grief and carries practically no compensation in the way of gratitude. They'll see me in hell before I'll put that quarantine back again if the epidemic gets worse. God damn the way people kick!

Zinger<sup>1</sup> called me up and did everything but cuss me for closing the churches.

It's sure hell! And if things get worse again I'll get the blame for taking the quarantine off and the people who will kick most are the ones who are kicking at me now because the quarantine is in force.

However powerless Mineville public officers sometimes seem to be, it should be clear that they may be very strong against individuals when they have the public actively behind them. For instance, the health officer is able to issue an order for a resident to desist in spreading a venereal disease, with almost utter confidence that it will not be defied openly. When there are two medical doctors in town, even the one who is not a public official holds an iron hand of possible public exposure over such offenders. A local physician said:

The health officer is supposed to stop any woman of promiscuous tendencies if she has a social disease. He is empowered to lock them up if they don't stop.

Yes, I have stopped several. I call them up to my office and warn them.

You bet they stop. Only a short time ago a fellow came to me with a dose and told me from whom he got it. She was a married woman and a mother. I simply called her to my office and told her she would have to stop such conduct as long as she was diseased. She wasn't a bit bashful about it and she commenced treatment immediately because

<sup>1</sup> A clergyman.



she was in love with the fellow at the time and she wanted to be clean for him.

Community wrath falls heavily upon the sex offender at the moment of discovery. Yet, strong as is the initial feeling, it loses its force with striking rapidity. This is well brought out in the Fagney case of several years ago in which five men contributed to the delinquency of a fourteen-year-old girl. Four of these men fled from the community to parts unknown while the feeling against them was at fever heat. A year later one of their number returned and was able to resume his former social position without difficulty, whereas had he remained in the community a penitentiary sentence might have been forced upon him by public opinion.

Certain infuriated individuals went so far as to maintain that the Fagney offenders should be lynched. Most of the populace, however, willingly waited for the regular procedure of justice with the result that no formal punishment was administered. And, incidentally, the girl is now said to be happily married to a well-respected young man in a larger neighboring community.

Present-day Minevillers often threaten to take the law into their own hands, but they almost never do so excepting minor cases in which a parent forces a man to marry his daughter at the point of the gun. When the town was a pioneer settlement, however, popular justice was very much the customary sort of justice. Much less was formally done about law and order than at present. Gun-toting was the rule and murders were not infrequent. Yet old-timers assert that public opinion and the consciences of individuals were far more effective in keeping order in those days and that defiance of an indifference to law enforcement has never been so general as is now (1931) the case.



Today the "most respectable" residents are likely to joke about breaking important laws and not be affected adversely by public pressure. With the pioneer days long past, we have the striking fact that observance or non-observance of law appears to depend now, as much as ever before, upon individual conscience.

Honest Dutch Homan, a septagenarian who emigrated from Central Europe some forty-five years ago, provides a good illustration of conscience at work where law was ineffective. Dutch insists upon his right to have the beer and wine to which he has been accustomed all of his life—and he has it without a guilty conscience. Still, witness his remorse years after he had broken a game law:

When I don't do the right thing it upsets me. I tell you something. One time when I was at my claim by Goose Lake I was sitting by the window and there was a moose in the lake eating grass. I had my gun in my hand and it was an awful temptation to shoot her. Well, she came up on the bank and just like that I let her have it. My God, I was sorry. I wished a thousand times I never killed that moose. I don't want to do something agin' the law.

Well, I had to do something and so I took a flashlight and held it between my knees and skinned and cleaned her. Then I carried her in the mine. I don't know what to do with her, and so I tell Howard Roth and at night times we go out after a quarter or so—and I tell you it was fine meat.

I never tasted better meat but I was sorry I killed her. But I suppose I would do it again. You know how it is. Oh well, they all do it out there. But anyway, I don't like to do such things. I couldn't do much wrong.

The game laws are peculiarly easy to break in the wide mountainous territory surrounding Mineville. The field is so large that adequate policing is impracticable and deviations from lawful conduct may easily be kept from the public. Thus, justifiable as the people generally admit these

laws to be, individual conscience must remain the strongest restraining force in determining their effectiveness.

#### THE COURTS

When investigated, Mineville's police court was not doing a rushing business because the town policeman was also police-court judge and he was not prone to make arrests. He said that he was in favor of heavy fines so that he did not have to arrest folks so often. A perusal of the record-book showed that the usual cause for arrest was drunkenness. To a native Mineviller this heavy book may be very interesting. In it he sees a record of drunken lapses of his friends in years past which are greatly at variance with their present modes of conduct. Also, he may note the oft-repeated arrests of town drunkards long since dead, who during his childhood were pointed out as object lessons of the effects of the liquor habit.

Most of the minor cases are heard in justice court, the sessions of which are held in a small room in the basement of the courthouse. The presiding justice of peace sits in a swivel chair at one end of the room while the attorneys, the accused, and the jury sit near by. In chairs along three sides of the room sit curiosity-seekers, prospective jurors, and witnesses. A typical case is that in which John Majuric, a Serbian and a father of eight children, was fined twenty-five dollars and costs for having taken several bales of hay from a rancher.

The district court is in session four times each year, but the judge, whose territory includes three counties, visits Mineville about twice a month in order to dispose of probate matters, etc.

Most of the serious court cases arising in the county are

settled in the district court. Not infrequently, however, appeal is made to the state supreme court and from there to the federal courts. A case of 1929 involved over one hundred thousands of dollars, and one of 1927 concerned possession of property which was in prospect of being sold for four times that amount. Both of these instances related to mining properties as do most of the larger court cases of the community.

Crime, of other than a petty nature, is not conspicuous in Mineville. A study of the criminal cases held in the district court during the thirty-seven years of Crystal County's existence revealed an average of about eight cases per year in which informations and indictments were filed. The mining part of the county, of course, contributed more than half of these.

Strangers commit a very large share, if not most, of the serious crimes tried in the district court. The following is a rather large criminal calendar for a recent quarterly term of this court—those names italicized representing strangers:

## STATE OF —————

*versus*

*L. P. Galisbury* and *E. Jacobson*—FIRST DEGREE BURGLARY

*C. Drowning* and *E. Ragnuson*—ROBBERY

*C. Drowning* and *E. Ragnuson*—ASSAULT with intent to commit  
BURGLARY

Betty, Henry and Emma Loso—POISONING LIVESTOCK

*E. Parkway*—ASSAULT in the SECOND DEGREE

*Mrs. V. Cocks*—CARRYING CONCEALED WEAPONS

*R. Carterson*—(Appeal from Justice Court)—VAGRANCY

*Mrs. M. Doyle*—(Appeal from Justice Court)—DISTURBING THE  
PEACE<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from the *Mineville Mail*, the weekly paper—names changed.

Of late years crime has been on the wane in the county. This is particularly noticeable in the case of acts of violence, only ten cases of which have been tried during the past six years.

There seems to be scarcely any doubt that were Mineville less isolated or larger her crime rate would be higher. For speedy exit from the town is to be had on but three roads, each of which may be policed efficiently on a moment's notice in order to prevent the getaway of a criminal. Then the community is so small that people in general and police officers in particular tend to have a rough notion of everyone who is in town and of everything that is going on. Outlaws such as gangsters cannot easily withdraw into their own secretive groups in Mineville as they can in the shelter of the tangled mesh of large-city anonymity. In the intimacy of the community a stranger tends to receive especial notice, the police officers watching his movements and ordering him out of town upon slight suspicion. It is worth bearing in mind, however, that this same intimacy keeps many infractions of residents from coming to the attention of the courts and hence from being recorded.

The district court is very efficiently conducted, owing to the ability of the presiding judge whose district includes two other counties besides Crystal County. Lawyers are not permitted to engage in needless horseplay. The judge, who is chairman of a committee which is making a revision of the criminal code for the state of ———, is so well versed in the law that he is able to dispose of cases quickly—often to the dismay of a tricky lawyer.

Citizens are of the opinion that nothing causes more miscarriage of justice after formal legal processes have been put into action than relations of intimacy between judge or jury

and the parties to a case. For this reason it is believed that judges and juries in the small town should be strangers, for as a Mineville saying goes, "One look at a jury and you can tell what the decision will be before the testimony is given." Hence the theory that a juror or judge is to base his decisions entirely upon what he hears in the courtroom may not be very effective in the small town. Indeed, there seems to be much room to doubt that the average juror or judge in a small town can temporarily disregard his deeply-rooted attitudes toward the parties of a case—attitudes which he has formed through many years of contact with these persons.

We have already noted that the editor of the local paper does not print scandal or take sides on issues. A few years ago he assumed the liberty of merely printing a list of the cases tried in the justice and police courts but discontinued after one or two attempts. He is criticized strongly by some townsfolk for not thus scandalizing persistent misdemeanants. There seems to be little appreciation of the pressure which offenders and their sympathizers are able to bring to bear upon him. His critics say:

There are some fellows around here who are making themselves nuisances. Those guys would be a lot more careful if their behavior was broadcasted to the whole town every week in print. If a fellow saw his name in the *Mail* opposite a charge of drunkenness, for a few weeks in succession, he would soon learn to be more sensible. I don't see why Joe can't print a list of names and offenses.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> No objection is made to the publishing of the court calendar of the district court, which contains the more serious offenses.





PART III

GROUP LIFE IN MINEVILLE



## CHAPTER XI<sup>1</sup>

### GLIMPSES OF THE FAMILY

#### FAMILY IMPORTANCE ACCENTUATED

In a large community persons are likely to know one another for years without knowing each other's near kin, but in Mineville every person tends to be thought of in terms of the family to which he belongs. Nearly every family lives in a separate house, and each house is a physical symbol for a family, e.g., the "Montgomery house," the "Burns house," the "Coe house"—houses in which they usually live for many years if not for generations. The residents are inclined so much to think of their community as a constellation of families that normally their first step in identifying a fellow-resident whom they do not know is to classify him according to his kinship relations. If he is only casually known, he is likely to be known as "one of that Johnson family." His standing in the community depends so much upon the

<sup>1</sup> The reader must not assume that he will derive a rounded view of family life in Mineville from the present chapter. It is merely intended to add a few glimpses to the many mentions or implications of family life to be found throughout this volume. The emphasis on sex is to be explained partly by the close connection which that side of life has with family problems and by the fact that we have no other chapter in which the material fits more logically. But of all factors which limit the scope of the chapter, the greatest is our need to avoid materials which promised to embarrass townsfolk involved. It is unfortunate that to reveal almost any case in sufficient detail to throw much light on the rôle of the family in the community would be to cause humiliation. The device of resorting to small allusions from individual cases is hopelessly inadequate. In the first place, even most of these which are revealing would be identified at once by someone who would proceed to pass his knowledge to the rest of the town; and, in the second place, only a long-

family to which he belongs that his family may be a perpetual blight to him or it may give him social recognition far beyond his merits.

The power of the family in small and isolated communities is proverbial. A single family is so large a part of the whole that it becomes of importance as an economic and political unit, while a number of interrelated families multiply this influence almost proportionately. In Mineville the extent of intermarriage is not large because of the newness of the town (sixty-six years) and the relative instability of the population—particularly the tendency of the youths to seek their fortunes elsewhere. Still the influence of the two largest families is well shown in city and county politics, for their members hold the following offices or positions at the present time: mayor of Mineville, city treasurer, sheriff, county treasurer, clerk of the court, county superintendent of schools, coroner, one member of the grade-school board,

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time picture can truly present the situation. Certain statistical studies could have been made, perhaps, but at best they would have left the analysis in a sketchy condition.

There is no more colorful drama in a small town than that played by a group of intermarried families. A large part of the story of the town would be told if we were to portray thoroughly their internal relations and the rôles which they have played in the community over a period of, say, forty years. Any intelligent Mineviller can draw several such pictures from his knowledge of Mineville people. With an abundance of corroborating information, he can show the trying economic crises through which a family has passed; its struggles for social eminence; its suffering during sickness and death; its feverish efforts to prevent its skeleton closet from being pried open by the community; serious conflict because of the stain individual members have brought upon the group; the complex relationships between parent and child; intense affection, envy, and hatred for other families in town, etc. But even the fact that "everybody talks about it" would not justify our putting this information into print. Facts about individual families which are considered to be so normal that they go almost unnoticed in Mineville would at once lose much of

three members of the high-school board, one teacher in high school, and three teachers in the grade school. Such an expression of strength in community affairs indicates what every Mineviller knows: that either of these families is to be feared and respected when it sees fit to present a solid front on a community issue, and that when both happen to agree they are well-nigh invincible. However, there is a great deal of individuality among them and so they do not unite on many issues. On one occasion two members of one of the groups even sought the same office.

Some Minevillers complain about the balance of power which these families so often exercise and of the extent to which they "live off the taxpayers." During hard times when other people do not have jobs the economic argument takes on especial force because election to a county office usually means two jobs in one family since men elected appoint their wives as their deputies. This is serious in Mineville where no more than one woman in twenty is able to contribute to the upkeep of the family other than by "keeping chickens." But whether or not the power of the large families is very unwholesome in the long run is difficult to say since the influences exerted are often much concealed.

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their dignity and scandalize the families if put into print. Besides, there is no doubt that not a few people in Mineville would leave town if they knew what their ratings in the eyes of the community really are—and prominent citizens are among them. After all, it is quite one thing to surmise that people have certain information and ideas about us but it is quite another to have a permanent record of the matter in print, so that all may read it for years to come. In order to picture what we would be doing to a Mineviller, the reader need only imagine his reaction toward having the inner secrets of his own family broadcast to two thousand of its friends, enemies, distant acquaintances, and business associates—practically everyone with whom it comes into contact. Minevillers have a right to at least an illusion of privacy.

At any rate, most of the people in these families are bred-to-the-bone Minevillers who have never lived elsewhere, excepting while away to school, and who expect to stay in town until they die. For this reason they have a deeper community loyalty than a large share of the residents who do not like the town, who take little pride in it, and who are continually yearning to leave. In fact, they seem to be developing office-holding traditions which go from generation to generation and hence feel that they have certain prestige to maintain.

Some writers emphasize the stimulating effect of the large city upon its residents in contrast to the supposedly deadening effect of the small town. They seem not to have taken into account that, in a small town, families are so conscious of one another and measure their own achievements in relation to one another over so long a period of time that they may be keenly stimulated to excel. Family rivalries are set up and parents bear much envy and contempt for one another on the basis of the achievements of their children. No parent wants his children to be known as "dumbbells" to the community at large, and there are some families who even make a fetish of scholarship. As a class, the Italians seem least to urge their children to rise from the uneducated working class—judging from the fact that practically no Italian children attend high school. An Italian boy remarked: "It's no use to go to high school unless you are going to college." Finns, Serbians, and Germans, on the other hand, have all had scholarship leaders in the high school. One immigrant mother said: "I would think that some of the leading people of the town would be ashamed to have my kids lead when theirs barely pass." Similarly another one said: "Herbert is making good at the university, John is going when he finishes high school, and my girl is going to



show a lot of people in this town a few things. She is going to college next year and that is more than most of them do."

"Keeping up with the Joneses" is a familiar way of expressing the disposition of one family not to be excelled by another in regard to material things. We cannot say that this sort of thing is more prevalent in Mineville than in a city, for many of the people seem to feel that others "know what they are" despite material accompaniments. Nevertheless it is common. The following statement by a thirteen-year-old girl is illustrative:

I can't get a new dress or a pair of shoes or anything else without Alice Angland getting the same darned thing. And it's the same way with Joan [Alice's mother] and mother. If mother gets something new Joan gets about the same thing, and if mother says we are going to Gold tonight Joan says, "We've been planning to go Saturday." Joan and Alice never compliment us on anything; they just sulk when we show them something and pretty soon they have something new too. It takes the pleasure out of getting new things for us.

The interest which Mineville families take in one another is clearly shown in the extent to which they follow the destinies of families that have departed from the community. Their attitude is, "Once a Mineviller, always a Mineviller." In two interviews an elderly gentleman and his wife were able to recall from memory the names of 236 departed families, representing 557 persons in all, without counting children born since the time of departure. In the great majority of the cases they knew the precise town in which the person or family was living and many other details as to their fates after having left Mineville.

#### SIZE OF FAMILIES

Normally there are about 300 families of more than one person in Mineville. An indication of the size of these fam-

ilies is given in Figure 1. In explanation it should be said that of the 73 families listed as having no children, 39—mostly old folks whose children have departed—once had

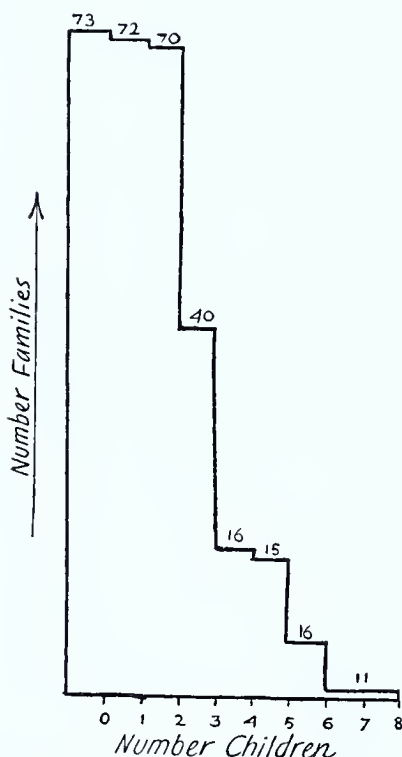


FIG. 1.—Number of children at home in families.

children at home. Therefore, 34, or 11.5 per cent, are families that never have had children. Then numerous others of the families indicated would also appear larger in the chart if married and departed children were included. Some would appear smaller if the following distribution of adult children staying at home were not counted:

- 26 families with 1 adult<sup>1</sup> child living at home
- 11 families with 2 adult children living at home
- 4 families with 3 adult children living at home
- 2 families with 4 adult children living at home

Following the trend of other communities in America, the family in Mineville is rapidly growing smaller. Forty years ago the community had many families of six to twelve children; even fifteen years ago a mother with six to nine children was a commonplace; but, at present, the two largest families have seven and eight children, respectively. (Several mothers who still have minors at home have had seven offspring, two others have had eight, and another nine.)

<sup>1</sup> Twenty-one years or over.

A mother of twelve children in the past generation believes that mothers of modern small families have little reason to be overworked in taking care of their children.

All of my children are married. It's so strange that none of them has more than three children although all have children. Only two of them have as many as three. You know, five children seems to me like a very small family. Goodness, I would think that four or five children was a snap. Of course, the older ones help a lot in a large family, especially when they are much older.

An elderly grandfather also is not impressed that the burden of a very large family is excessive:

I ain't a bit sorry I had ten children. I would have spent just as much for four and not have given them anymore. I think it's better to have a large family, and besides, it's a pleasure to work for them.

Nowadays the average Mineviller agrees that "four kids should be the limit for a workingman." The head of the largest family in town at present said:

Eight kids is a big family. Too big! You can't do all you would like to do for them and it's awful hard on the woman. She hasn't time for anything but to work for the kids. We love 'em all, of course, but I guess we had too many. Four or five would be a nice-sized family. But we get along somehow and seem to have plenty to eat and to keep warm on and it looks as if the kids are all going to go through high school. My kids are good. They co-operate. They have to.

Even an immigrant mother had modern ideas on the matter:

I don't believe in raising one kid and spoiling it, but four is too many. Three is about right but four is one too many for poor people like us.

I had no trouble having my kids. In about an hour after the pain started I was always all over it and resting. The trouble with most women today is that they don't work enough. Why my mother had all seven of us with absolutely nobody around. She was going somewhere in a buggy and one of the younger ones came almost without warning. It ain't supposed to be hard to have babies if a woman leads the right kind of life. It's not having the kids, but taking care of them after you have them that's hard.

Every resident who keeps up to date on gossip can tell of a number of single girls, to say nothing of married women, who have had illegal operations. Likewise, he knows the contraceptive precautions taken by a number of the townsfolk. The extent to which such information imparted in confidence to a friend sometimes has spread by way of gossip would fairly astound the victims. An example is:

A: Have you heard the latest news?

B: Not that I know of.

A: The Allens have another baby.

B: Another baby! That makes four and the end is not in sight. He'll have to keep his nose to the grindstone now. I wonder what was the matter. It looks like a case of carelessness to me. Henry knows what to do, doesn't he?

A: Yes, he knows as much as I do, and I don't have any trouble. I can't see why some people seem to get caught so easily. Henry keeps changing from one thing to another. Maybe he doesn't stick to one thing long enough to learn his business. He seems to be kind of bashful about buying the stuff in town and so he gets a big supply when he goes to Gold. I know what he is using. Something must have broken or he must have been drunk. I know he didn't want another. I feel sorry for his wife. She's such a poor manager anyhow.

Among the arguments advanced by Minevillers for wishing few or no children are: (1) demand for more luxuries, (2) demand for less work and more leisure time for women, (3) desire to save money for the future, (4) reluctance on the part of the man to assume responsibility, (5) waiting until better situated economically, (6) desire to have fewer children and give them more advantages, (7) congenital weakness, (8) fear of pregnancy, (9) barren but wish child of own flesh and blood and hence will not adopt, (10) intend to adopt, (11) do not like children, (12) state of woman's health.

## FAMILY DISORGANIZATION

In 1873 Mineville had but three women, and four children of school age, out of a total population of about seventy-five. Two of these children are now grizzled old men—the oldest residents of Mineville—and two of the women were their mothers. Family life was mostly a matter of memories of “back home” to the men in that frontier wilderness. Not until 1878 and the years immediately following did many of these pioneers write home for their families and sweethearts to make the long and often perilous journey by stagecoach over the mountains and plains. A woman who came in 1878, as a girl of ten years, suggests the effect of frontier conditions upon the newcomers:

When I came we lived in Stump. It was a shock to us to be forced to live in such conditions. We had no chairs and, although there were chairs in the camp, there were some people in Stump who thought the Gages were putting on airs when my father had a cabinet-maker make six chairs for us. Everyone did not have chairs and those people thought stools and boxes should be good enough for us.

The large number of single men in Mineville throughout most of its history and especially during boom periods has had much to do with giving the town a peculiarly lively temper. These men have spent their money freely and have done a great deal of drinking and gambling. Of the life of the single man in the boom town of Crystal an octogenarian bachelor said:

They didn't have much spare time with their ten-hour working day and there was no place else to go excepting “hook shops,” dances, and saloons. I patronized the saloons and the red-light for the sake of my clothing business but I didn't object at all.

Right over there on that old foundation is where my store stood. It makes me feel bad to see how everything is gone. The first Christmas I was in Crystal a fellow gave me a black eye in that old saloon.



And there is where the "hookers" were left. There was many a high-fibre. That is the only "hook house" about five girls in it. Same I had in that place; there were

No, I never saw a woman and I've seen lots of 'em I wanted to marry. I've liked lots of them wanted to marry 'em with little or no clothing on but I never

I've had more of 'em. line of business dealings with women than you can realize. In my have business I've had to deal with them and let me tell you there been plenty of them who have thrown themselves at me. I've jumped over the back fence many a time but never because I made the advances. You know it's a pretty low man who makes advances to a married woman.

The "housebreaker" is a regular part of community gossip. Memories of his deeds die hard. One octogenarian says he knows of two homes broken in Mineville many years ago by a man now aged, but who was then "a lady-killer." The accused man described his relations with women as follows:

I don't know anything about the girls around here any more. They all look pure to me. I don't go to the dances, and a fellow would have to go to the dances to find out about them.

I don't have much of a chance to find out what they are like because they wouldn't look at an old fellow like me, anyway.

I never bothered single girls—only married women and widows. I always found married women very sympathetic. A married woman means business; she knows what she wants and there is no fooling around about it.

What do you think of Reichard's girl [Mrs. Modine]?

Do you suppose she had other men beside him?

If they loved, it was all right.

I don't believe she took men for ten dollars. A woman like that would be worth quite a bit. I always paid a girl more than her regular price if she had a good shape and was good looking. They have it coming for the life they lead. I never went to them much—only about once a week.

I don't know whether I'm any good now or not. I've been pure for five years. That may have something to do with the way I hold my age.



A young present-day housebreaker upon being reprimanded said:

When I was married my rights weren't respected. Fellows had relations with my wife; they broke up my home. I don't see why I shouldn't do the same with the other fellow's wife, too, as long as everybody else is doing it.

With all the peculiar emphasis given to sex in a community which so often has an unusually high proportion of single men, nothing makes for more animated gossip in Mineville than family conflict or any defiance of the customary ideals of family relations. Unless the persons involved are very obscure, they are talked about on every hand. The following statements are illustrative:

That serious operation that Mrs. Kearney had last year was an abortion. I can't tell you how I know. She has been familiar with "Josh" Paddock. Everybody in the neighborhood has been watching it for months.

Mrs. Franny is a stepper like her daughters. She goes up on Luck Hill with Fred Tomkins right along. Franny is in Gold and they haven't heard from him for a month.

Old Harry forced Chuck Rolland to marry Jane at the point of a gun thirty years ago. I don't know what is the matter with Chuck. He never amounted to much.

The Doyles quarrel all the time. There is no love in that household. But what could you expect. They had to get married and everybody knows it.

I knew his father forty-five years ago. You really couldn't expect more of the son. It's in the blood.

Forty years ago people used to see Mrs. Doak sneaking up to Snell's house. Everybody talked about it. You would never think it to look at her withering frame now. She was quite attractive as a young woman. No one knew whether her husband knew. Snell surely had a fatal attraction for the ladies. They went after him.

A: Do you suppose her husband knows about it?

B: Of course he knows about it. He must know it when everybody in town has known it for so many years. The chances are that she gets some money out of it and he wouldn't object to that.

A: He seems to be very considerate of her. He surely puts up a good bluff if he knows it.

The Pattersons have terrible quarrels about Ellen. Patterson wants to let her go out and Mrs. Patterson refuses. When Ellen asks her father she goes, when she asks her mother she stays home. There will be trouble in that house yet.

Poor Mrs. Wilmar. She wants to get out of this town and he makes her stay. He likes the town and she hates it. All of his cronies are here and he doesn't want to leave them. She is terribly disagreeable with him about it sometimes.

Mineville police officers who have served during the last quarter of a century agree with the former officer who said:

Until you make a business of being around you have no idea of what is going on. I've taken some of the most respected women in town home when they were dead drunk and the next day they would pass me on Main Street with their heads up in the air. You would be surprised how much goes on that the people in general never find out. It is simply astounding the number of husbands and wives in a town of this size who violate marriage vows without being discovered. When it was my business to be around town at all hours of the night I could hardly believe my eyes at the men and women I saw sneaking in this house and in that—and I suppose it is worse nowadays since most everybody has an automobile. I never told a soul. It was none of my affairs unless a disturbance was started. But I'll tell you it was a revelation and a disappointment to me to discover what the marriage vows actually mean to so many people.

Nevertheless, the general public secures such an enormous amount of information about moral lapses and family conflict that one who did not know the total situation might easily be led to assume that family life in Mineville is rather

unwholesome. Indeed, public attention in Mineville tends to be centered on what it judges to be unwholesome and to take the rest for granted. For this reason information secured by any interviewer is likely to be one sided.

Proceeding on the hypothesis that family disorganization is normally more prevalent in a mining than in a farming population, the rates shown in Table VIII for the county, which is about one-half farming, should at least be as high as those in Mineville. While admittedly the rates for Mineville

TABLE VIII

Years	Number Divorces	Number Marriages	Ratio
1895-99.....	10	97	1:9.7
1900-1904.....	21	126	1:6.
1905-9.....	12	66	1:5.5*
1910-14.....	7	52	1:7.4
1915-19.....	15	100	1:6.7
1920-24.....	19	72	1:3.8*
1925-29.....	13	72	1:5.5

\* Industrial Depression.

might be much higher, the common sense of residents does not cause them to come to such a conclusion. Another factor which negates somewhat the accuracy of the figures is that for the last twenty years Judge Wineton has been judge of the district court. He is a man who refuses to grant a divorce without conclusive evidence that the marriage is doomed to failure under ordinary circumstances. So, many cases of divorce are not counted in the figures shown because upon his refusal to grant them they were simply applied for and granted elsewhere—usually in Gold. True, some few outside divorces are granted in Mineville, but they are negligible when compared with the larger number of Mine-

ville divorces granted elsewhere. Then, on the side of marriages it should be said that since the coming of the automobile a considerable portion of Mineville marriages take place out of town and an occasional outside couple motors to Mineville in order to secure a license.

When a divorce occurs in Mineville, one or both of the parties nearly always leaves the community—at least temporarily. Pressure of public scrutiny and of being forced to meet a former mate frequently are influences responsible for this fact.

Like divorces, the matter of the control which parents have over their children does not seem to be unusual one way or the other in Mineville. Frankly perplexed, the average parent concludes approximately as did a father who said:

One can only do his best and trust to luck that everything will come out all right. It looks pretty hopeless sometimes and then sometimes it doesn't look so bad. You don't dare to be strict with them and you shouldn't give them too much freedom. Everybody gives you different advice. The best thing seems to be to use your own common sense and give your kids credit for having a little sense, too, because they are going to do pretty much what they want to, in the long run, whether you find it out or not.

There is a wide range in the power of parental control in Mineville. There is the Serbian parent who is practically able to sell his sixteen-year-old daughter in marriage to a fat, bald-headed, and middle-aged country man; and there are many families that are subjects of scandal because of the way the parents do their children's bidding. But most of the parents seem to agree that Mineville's children and youth are poorly controlled. In refutation of their assumption it may be noted that no Mineville youth who has lived the whole of his growing years in his home community has ever

become a habitual criminal for more than petty offenses. Then, although in 1910 there were fifty-three prostitutes in Mineville's redlight district (abolished 1917), but three Mineville girls in the last twenty-five years are known to have become full-time professional prostitutes and none of these did so at home. Similarly, the redlight district supported several men who were known as panderers, only one or perhaps two of whom were Mineville products. Such facts are rather striking when it is considered that the town has always had some young petty thieves, has been quite prolific in its output of girls who were reputed to be "loose," and has never been without a goodly supply of young men whose morals were subjects of general scandal.

## CHAPTER XII

### FROM THE CRADLE TO HIGH SCHOOL

#### THE PROBLEM

Mineville adults are manifestly ignorant of the present child life of the town beyond that in their own families, in those of a few friends or neighbors, or in the cases of some notorious problem children who are subjects of general gossip. That large and important part of the life of the town constituted by the relations of children with one another adults know little of, for the children live in a world of their own—a world in which they rate one another quite differently from the standings of their respective families in the community. They have their own fund of gossip, most of which is never communicated to adults. Even when grown-ups do acquire information of the relations of children with one another they tend to receive it from children or from adults who secured it second hand. School-teachers and the Boy Scout executive are practically the only adults who have occasion to observe child-to-child relations among more than a very few children. High-school students, other than Freshmen, know practically nothing of the group relationships in the grade school, and even eighth-graders pay little attention to what is going on among the “little kids” of their school. Also there is much isolation on the basis of sex, particularly since boys and girls are very poorly acquainted with the activities of one another away from school. It is striking that such ignorance can exist in a community in which “everyone” behaves as if he knows “everything” about everyone else.



Here an attempt is made to present briefly the typical patterns of child life over the years with emphasis on the present.

## DISTRIBUTION OF MINORS

Roughly one-third of Mineville's population is under twenty-one years of age. The 1930 school census contains the distribution by ages as shown in Table IX. The community represented by these children, however, extends be-

TABLE IX

Age in Years	No. of Children	Age in Years	No. of Children
1.....	20	12.....	25
2.....	21	13.....	23
3.....	16	14.....	35
4.....	18	15.....	29
5.....	20	16.....	24
6.....	34	17.....	34
7.....	21	18.....	28
8.....	31	19.....	31
9.....	27	20.....	32
10.....	28		—
11.....	22	Total.....	519

yond the city limits which the United States census of 1930 reported to have a population of 1,410. From a knowledge of families outside the corporation limits of the city but in the school district, the population of the latter may safely be placed at approximately four times that of the number of minor children indicated by the school census.

Classifying all of those who are thirteen years of age or younger as children or infants, as distinguished from youths, it is found that there are 95 of preschool age and 211 between the ages of six and thirteen years inclusive. What is to be said of these 306 human beings who constitute about

one-fifth of the population of the community and who are ever teeming with a zest for experience?

#### THE PRESCHOOL GROUP

While yet unborn the babe is a matter of public concern in Mineville. Women gossip about how "far along" Mrs. "So-and-So" is, "how well she carries it," and about other of the myriad details relating to pregnancy. Then upon the birth they continue their interest by talking about whether or not the mother had "a hard time" or "an easy time" during the delivery, and whether or not the infant is pretty, ugly, strong, weak, large, small, etc. Unless the family is very obscure, there is wide circulation of many such intimate details long before the *Mineville Mail* appears with its little announcement which reads: "Born to Mr. and Mrs. Jones on July 6th, an eight and one-half pound son. Both mother and son are reported to be doing nicely."

Once firmly ushered onto the scene, the infant passes before the critical eyes of mothers, young and old, who function as self-appointed advisers on his progress. Out of a "melting pot" of "Dr. Day told me this," "Dr. Hill in Gold told her that," and "The government bulletin says you must be careful," the most modern information on the care of infants and children is quite efficiently disseminated through the community. This enables some of the poorest families to watch over their developing children with surprising intelligence. But this is not to say that anything approaching perfection is achieved. In fact, on the negative side, the "school nurse" has a sorry tale to tell. Each year she examines all school children and all others whose parents seek such examination for them. She finds that, owing to financial and other reasons, many of the parents do not follow the health chart which she prepares for their children.

Year after year she finds the same children with infected tonsils, adenoids, defective vision, and undernourishment. In several instances the school board was obliged to deny children the right to attend school if their parents did not provide them with glasses. The speed with which one parent had his children fitted with glasses upon the school board's ultimatum was an interesting tribute to the power of intimacy, for he realized that derogatory gossip would, for some time, increase with his delay.

Coming now to the infant himself, there is, perhaps, little to be said which is peculiar to the small town until he acquires a community point of view. This comes to him, generally, between the ages of three and four years, after he has had an orientation period of going "calling" or shopping with mother, and of going numerous times to the church, the show, the ice-cream store, and the like, first in a carriage and later on foot. Meanwhile, too, he may have "got lost" occasionally when venturing too far from home. But gradually, he has acquired a grasp of the plan of the town and his mother has given him, for instance, the responsibility of going alone to the house of a friend who lives in another neighborhood or of going alone to Main Street, armed with a note to the butcher or grocer who fills a small order which is carried, or laboriously brought home by wagon or sled.

Excursions away from the neighborhood, however, are not the rule for children of preschool age, and parents whose children of that age do not spend most of their waking hours within easy hearing of mother's call are censured—particularly if the children play on Main Street. The few very young children who are inclined to spend much time on Main Street or near by become public characters at an early age, and public attention becomes focused upon the kind of "bringing up" their parents are giving them. At present,

the outstanding examples of this sort are "Mrs. K's kids" who have been dodging automobiles since they learned to walk. Their mother is severely censured for "letting her kids run wild." And yet there are other children who indulge in much more questionable activities, but whose parents do not come into the public eye as a result, for their children do not play on Main Street.

There is no group consciousness among all the children of the community between the ages of three and six years. Yet the children of these ages are well aware of the existence of one another and often surprise their parents by a breadth of acquaintanceship which is fostered by membership in the baby classes of Sunday schools, in groups invited to birthday parties or in kindergarten, as well as from chance meetings on Main Street and in play groups.

The most far-reaching group feeling among the little tots is found in the kindergarten, which is composed of seventeen children from all parts of the community. The socialized work-play activity in which these children engage for two hours each school day plus the responsibility of going long distances to and from school does much to enlarge the worlds in which they live.

Excepting the school grounds there are no playgrounds in Mineville, but this condition does not signify the unwholesomeness with which it would be associated in city life. For Mineville, with its abundance of vacant spaces, is one vast playground in which the small child may grow up largely unhampered by artificial conditions.

#### GRADE-SCHOOL CHILDREN—SPORTS AND GAMES

Once the children are in the grade school, sports and games begin to play a large part in their lives. The school

with its gymnasium and playground is the central point for such activities, but play in either place is a by-product of enforced assemblage of children so that they may attend school. Only rarely are they seen in the environs of the school when it is not in operation.

Outdoor play at the grade school is, in the main, unsupervised. This, however, does not interfere with its effectiveness although it does permit bullying which an alert supervisor would not countenance.

Activity on the school playground is exceedingly diverse. At one extreme there are children who because of laziness, physical frailty, lack of courage, actual or imagined discrimination of their playmates against them, and from other causes, do not participate in the more vigorous group activities. While at the other extreme are those who play so enthusiastically that the first hour spent at school work is seriously interfered with because they are exhausted physically.

Football, baseball, marbles, roller skating, snowball battles between organized forces, and an occasional fight are the highlights among the boys' outside play. The girls, on the other hand, jump rope, play hopscotch, roller skate, and some few of them play baseball with the boys, but most of them serve as audiences for the boys or for the active girls—when not merely promenading and chattering or gossiping as do their mothers.

Indoor play is well supervised. It consists mostly of volley-ball and basket-ball, which are played in the gymnasium regularly under the supervision of teachers. Boys and girls alike participate in these games, and there is an intense rivalry between the upper grades, as a rule.

Excepting volley-ball and basket-ball, the play activities

at school also take place away from school, in small neighborhood groups. There is also much coasting on sleds and scooters by younger children, while older boys of grade-school ages hunt, fish, swim, ski, and ice skate. Within a mile or two from town the boys hunt rabbits, wild chickens, ducks, squirrels, gophers, and sundry other animals and fowls. Sometimes they go fishing a mile from town at Stone Creek but generally they tramp or catch a ride to Swamp Creek, Clear Creek, or to the power-house, which are from four to eight miles distant.

#### BOYS' AND GIRLS' GANGS

Strictly speaking, boys' "gangs" have been rare in Mineville. Various groups are referred to as "gangs" but more often as "bunches." The solidarity of these bunches has varied from the well-knit conflict group to that in which the group existed more in the minds of boys in other parts of town than in the minds of the supposed members. But usually there have been small friendship and play groups which have sprung up in whatever part of town a number of boys of about the same age have lived near one another. Even the few which have had a predatory and conflict nature have tended to dissolve into cliques when the boys have entered high school, if not before.

During the first ten years of the mining camp of Mineville there were too few boys to form gangs. Mr. Dufbee says that he was the only boy in town for a while during 1871. Thereafter, the number of boys increased very slowly until the Brogers came in 1877, and the Shragues, Pollards, and others came in 1878. Among these children of pioneer days a lively topic of discussion was: "What would you do if the Indians came?"



Since then the world of the child in the community has undergone great changes. From a time when there were scarcely sufficient children to maintain a one-room school in the late seventies the town has developed until at the present a fine modern school building accommodates about two hundred and fifty. But even in the days of the one-room school various "bunches" were recognized. And these "bunches" seem, according to gray-haired men who were members, to have been organized much more upon a conflict basis than are those of the present time. In fact, there even appears to be a marked contrast between the serious conflict of "bunches" of twenty years ago and the friendly rivalry among the boys of today. Other than this, the only noteworthy change is that accompanying the increased sophistication of present-day youngsters, which includes an earlier interest in sex and marked lowering of the ages at which they think they are "too big" to play games which are not indulged in by grown-ups.

The continuity of "bunches" is disrupted by several factors. In the first place, the characteristic shifting of the population—especially of the youths—creates a condition in which very few of the "old gang" are left in the community when manhood's estate arrives. Then even among those who remain social distinctions and barriers arise in the course of time which are prone to negate the alliances of earlier days. Individual friendships may persist but as a rule the unity of the boyhood clique does not long remain.

Although the various parts of town have always tended to have their bunches, boys of successive age groups in a given locality show widely different factional groupings and group solidarities. Some of them go to another part of town for a pal. Still for over forty years there have been the

following bunches either among boys of a particular time or in the reminiscence of men: northeast town, northwest town, depot, Barkerville, Kirklande, Roselle, brewery, Stump, Crystal, and the bunch from the farms.

*The northeast town bunch.*—There is a certain feeling of group consciousness among all boys on the North Side, but this part of town is so large that it always has had several “bunches” more or less independent of one another. Roughly, the tendency has been toward division into what may be called the “northeast” and “northwest” town groups. In history, however, there have been many deviations from this rule, for there has often been a group in the central part of the North Side along with much overlapping. Of the northeast town “gang” of his day a man, who was a member of a rival group, said:

In that bunch there was Ed Deering, Charlie Deering, Frank Noel, and the three James boys. That gang was altogether different from us. They gambled and played marbles for keeps when we wouldn't think of doing such things. They drank, too, and smoked when they got a chance.

It had a leader in Frank and he is a leader among the same element today. You will notice that as men those fellows turned to whiskey, gambling, and wild women.

Besides neighborhood relations, moral ideals and age are the main factors in determining the membership. An age range of about three years often exists with most of the boys being in the same grade in school. And there is usually no connection between the grouping of boys in successive periods in a given part of town.

Twenty years after the time of Frank Noel the Northeast Side bunch temporarily had definite and formal organization. In the words of Clifton Childs (age twenty-one):

Our gang had such guys as Polson, Ken Sunderlin, Will Sands, Hal Crothers, Jack Crothers, and Elson Trotter. We had a treasury and a regular meeting place by our house. One time we had a whole shed full of old copper, brass, rubber, and sacks we sold.

Group activities? Well, we used to rustle copper and bottles and other stuff. And it's a wonder we didn't injure someone when we had battles with the Roselle bunch and fired B.B. guns at each other. You might call it a group activity when Jack and Hal Crothers, and I, and a couple of others had Sadie Short in a woodshed and all of us went after her.

I can't tell you anything about the present bunch of younger kids. I know only about the time when I was in them.

The fellows who liked me when we had that gang as little kids like me now, no matter what I do, and the ones who hated our gang in those days hate me today.

It's hard to tell what group fellows belong to when they get older because they change.

On the Northeast Side, at present, there are four groups of young boys. Occasionally, a member or members of one group may go over to play with another but as a rule most of their play activities are within their own group. These bunches may be recognized at some time during almost any day that the weather permits them to play baseball, football, marbles, and other games in the streets near their homes. And in their respective groups they can be seen trekking to and from the old swimming holes of Stone Creek during the summer.

For a reason unknown to grown-ups, during the summer of 1928 there was a feud between a Barkerville faction and a North Side faction. It raged for several weeks. Armed with sling shots, wooden swords, and other paraphernalia, these boys invaded one another's neighborhoods after dark. Their signals and maneuvering were likely to alarm the unwary adult lest he be the victim of a stray missile.

*The northwest town bunch.*—There has always tended to be a group consciousness among boys in the northwest part of town. The status of this group has frequently shifted. Twenty years ago it was not especially high but thirty-five years ago the situation seems to have been different:

I was in what you might call the northwest town gang. In our gang we had Tim Clark, Chuck Clark, Frank Bond, Gil Bond, "Fatty" Jones, Oscar Simpson, Bryan Best, Fred Niles, Ralston Manning, and the three Meyerbeers. We didn't smoke, drink, or gamble, and we stuck together till we were fourteen or fifteen years old that I know of.

You know as well as I do that the boys from our gang all turned out to be very good citizens—excepting the Bonds, and they aren't so bad outside of their drinking.

There were some isolated fellows. The Stewart boys and the Clark-son boys lived in our part of town but they didn't associate with us much. They were sort of apart and good Scotch Presbyterian churchgoers. Then, the two Stein girls [Jews] were not that well off. I guess you would say that they were isolated. I had one of them sitting on each side of me in the third grade and they had weak kidneys which made things rather unpleasant for me at times.

Our gang was never up to destruction and they have been about the same class of men that they were boys. Our code of ethics was determined by our folks. We did just about what our folks would stand for. I remember a stunt that made us look down on the Bond boys. We were playing mumblety-peg and a penny was to be buried in one of a number of holes. Instead, the Bonds buried fresh cow manure which a kid ran his hand into.

No, I don't believe the friendships of gang days hold over to manhood very much. Fifteen or twenty years ago I valued them enough to lend money which I didn't get back, but they mean little or nothing to me now—or to the others, so far as I know.

There were no contests between groups that I remember.

We played baseball but we called it "work up" and all the kids in a part of town would be in the game.

We played hide and seek, run sheep run, back out, and such games until we were fifteen or sixteen. Those games are out of date—especially with kids so old.

*The depot bunch.*—The depot bunch is composed of those boys living in the neighborhood of the railroad depot. Fifteen years ago and earlier, when there were several very large families in that neighborhood, the depot bunch was an important group among the boys. But today there are fewer boys and the group is not so well knit as in the past.

*The Barkerville bunch.*—The Barkerville bunch is one of the largest in town and once indulged in baseball contests against the "town team." Between thirty and forty years ago, many of the "best kids" in town lived in Barkerville; twenty years ago they were classed as "tough"; and, at present, there is very much of a mixture with a predominance of poorer-class boys and a large mixture of nationalities.

The assistant principal of the grade school, who, by virtue of his position, becomes the best-informed person in the community upon the relationships of children, spoke as follows of the Barkerville gang:

The Barkerville gang is a good place to look for the fact that there is no nationality discrimination in Mineville. There you have two Daynes, two Donaldsons, three Bovichs, two Stevvans, one Rhapp, Bill Merkla, the Fence boys, and some others. It is interesting that one of the Donaldsons is in high school and yet he still has some contact with the old gang. Then there are the two Stevvan boys who have not lived in Barkerville for a number of years and yet you see them going back to the old gang at times.

The Boy Scout organization tends to do away with this gang; I can notice that distinctly. It takes boys from all over town and fosters intimate contacts between them.

In discussing the Barkerville gang further the assistant principal mentioned the case of Ned Dix, who is a very conspicuous example of the unattached boy in the community. Ned, a member of a leading family, is of weak physique, is



somewhat backward in school, and has an abundance of what is in slang termed "crust." Very talkative, he foists his company upon anyone, anywhere, and at any time whether he is wanted or not. Of him the assistant principal remarked:

I have seen Ned come over to the Barkerville gang. He is most likely to come when he has a new bicycle or something else to show off. He has no gang in particular and will go any place for recognition because he's generally stepped on and kicked around.

*The Kirklande bunch.*—About a mile southwest of Main Street, and somewhat detached (not socially) from the town proper, is a neighborhood called Kirklande. Here resides the Kirklande bunch, now composed of small children.

This was never a conflict group. Twenty years ago there was a feeling of unity because of neighborhood relationships, but it is doubtful whether there was sufficient unity that the group would have presented a solid front against an outside oppressor of one of its members. The boys had too much work to do, and varied too much in age and social strata to have organized-play conflict activities with other bunches. Several of them divided their allegiance between Kirklande, Roselle, and Barkerville. At present, most of the ten members are dead or have departed from town and the relationships of those remaining rarely consists in more than a warm, sentimental attachment for one another because of common experiences during childhood.

*The Roselle bunch.*—The Roselle bunch has been characterized by an Italian flavor since the Italians moved into the neighborhood during the early part of the century. No gang in the community has remained so fully intact as has the present representation of this one. From boys in



their teens to those well along in their twenties, they have grown up from childhood together and are still a well-integrated group. Theirs is often called the "Dago bunch." It is made up of about fifteen young men who have passed together through the gamut of activities of growing boys and young men in the community. Often, when they were younger, they were obliged to become a strictly conflict unit in order to defend one or more of their members against the "town kids." Nowadays they show a marked preference for working, playing cards, and going to shows together.

*The Brewery bunch.*—The brewery bunch is now nearly extinct because of the absence of families with boys in that neighborhood. In history it reaches back over fifty years, and men approaching sixty years of age are still identified with it by other old-timers. This group never exceeded ten in membership. In the early days it was sometimes required to hold a solid front against the Stump bunch.

*The Stump bunch.*—For forty years preceding the last decade there were several large families of boys in Stump, a neighboring hamlet. These fellows were "tough guys" in the eyes of the "town kids," even though at bottom some of them were quite mild. The group as a whole was judged on the standards of a few of its members who smoked and chewed tobacco, swore more than the "town kids," and were reputed to indulge in strong liquor. A strike at one of them brought the group into a unity against the outsider, and bullies were numerous in its ranks.

The present Stump boys are too few to be termed a bunch but the group consciousness of members of the older bunches is very obvious from their associations with one another, even though they have long ago left that locality and are now men.

*The Crystal bunch.*—Like that from Stump, the now extinct Crystal bunch was “tough” in the eyes of Mineville boys and seemingly in their own eyes, for they were ever ready to take offense that they might engage in a fight. Too, they smoked and chewed tobacco, drank, swore immoderately, and were reputed to steal and do other things which lowered them in the eyes of “Mineville kids.” By tradition they felt obliged to be “hard-boiled.”

*The bunches from the ranches.*—In Mineville, farms are called “ranches.” The boys from the ranches have never had group solidarity and, perhaps, for the most part, have not had a group consciousness. They make some alliances among themselves and some with town bunches—these latter often very weak. To be farmers does not detract from the prestige of the boys unless they have unmistakable “rural yokel” personal traits which brand them as “hayseeds.” And, incidentally, such “hayseeds” with their barnyard odors, bashfulness, awkwardness, and homely modes of dress are not uncommon in each generation of farm children. Their isolation from the “town kids” with whom they attend school is often pathetic.

*Girls' cliques.*—As the girls pass from early childhood to adolescence they play less and less with boys. They are likely to start lifelong friendships with one another when not far from their cradle days. In fact, the average Mineville girl is not properly to be spoken of as a member of a clique but rather as having one or two close chums. When girls do belong to a clique, however, they limit their associations much more strictly than do the boys. Also, their cliques are determined by social position and moral ideals more than are boys'. Of them the assistant principal of the grade school has the following to say: “I think you may say that girls’

bunches are stronger and more distinct than boys' in this town. Anyway, the lines between those who are members and those who are not are much sharper among girls than among boys."

Then he went on to give the membership of the most powerful clique in the grade school—a group of eight girls who, having matured early sexually, are obsessed by sexual matters. Among his remarks were:

We have found some pretty rank notes which were written between Maxine Medlin, Daisie Pomeroy, and Dolly Lane.

The members of the clique seem to take pride in shocking the other girls.

This clique is very strong. We've had to interfere with the way they have insisted upon walking through the halls with their arms around each other. Its members live within it and seem to feel themselves apart from the rest of the school. The boys ignore them and seem to think they belong to an older set. This is because the girls travel with older fellows.

Daisie Pomeroy is about the worst of the lot. Last summer two women and a girl were engaged in illicit business in that house just below Bendee's and Daisie was with them a great deal of the time.

This bunch is not unique in Mineville. The grade school is rarely, if ever, without such a group.

#### OTHER ACTIVITIES

In general it may be said that Mineville children have little work to do outside of school. Here and there a child is reputed to be overworked and his parents are censured for the condition. But, as a whole, before they reach high-school age the boys are required to do little more than fill the woodbox, carry the coal, and run an occasional errand. As for the girls, they also go on errands in addition to "helping mother" in a superficial way, and in some cases taking care of babies for other people.

When children do not stay at home or in their own immediate neighborhoods in the evening they are most likely to attend the show or to congregate in the public library. They often secure permission to be absent from home after dark under the pretense of going to the library in order to read or obtain a book, whereas they are more interested in enjoying one another's company at that place. Without the library and the show, Main Street would have few attractions during the evening for all excepting some of the older grade-school girls who promenade about this main thoroughfare in an effort to attract members of the opposite sex who are several years their senior.

Ambitions to excel in athletic prowess are formed at an early age. The grade-school principal laments the high prestige on the playground held by youngsters who have exceptional physical powers but poor mental endowments or a feeble interest in school work. Young boys and girls look forward to the time when they will be in high school so that they may represent their town in football and basket-ball contests against high-school teams from towns within a radius of two hundred miles. For many years the girls' basket-ball teams from Mineville have been superior to most of the teams of their sex in the surrounding region—even those from larger cities. The boys, however, have usually been defeated, even though individual stars among them have stood high among those of the state, both in high school and at the state university.

The big events of the year for the children are Christmas, the Fourth of July celebration, the Sunday-school picnics, the fish-fry picnic, the opening and closing of school, and the coming of a circus or carnival to town. All these events stand prominently in the child's imagination for days and

even weeks in advance. But none has the power of the circus, which, upon arriving in town at four-thirty in the morning on its own special train, finds many a nervous little soul already awake and ready to put on his clothes and rush to the depot to see the animals unloaded—and to get a job so that he may earn a ticket to the main show.

Other common activities are attendance at Boy Scout functions, at Sunday school, and at parties; taking music lessons; participation in and practice for church plays; reading; being “in love”; gossiping; going to the movies; listening to “Amos ‘n’ Andy” over the radio; and a host of less frequent and less generally indulged-in affairs.

CHAPTER XIII<sup>1</sup>  
YOUTH: FLAMING AND OTHERWISE  
WORK AND SPORTS

Excepting a few weeks during harvesting season there are few opportunities for the boys of Mineville to obtain remunerative work even should they desire it. So, most of them know little of work outside of chores about the home until they have reached a man's physical strength, and are abruptly ushered into the workaday life of men. And for the girls, chances to earn money are even fewer. Unless they leave town the great majority of them have no future ahead aside from marriage and homemaking, or being burdens to their parents.

While Mineville's youth are of high-school age, they generally take much interest in athletic sports. In autumn football engrosses their attention, and large crowds of townsfolk "turn out" to see the heroes of the local high school receive their almost invariable drubbings at the hands of teams from neighboring towns. Winter brings basket-ball, a sport at which local teams do somewhat better—the most popular sport in Mineville. On an average of once a week the conventional yells resound through the gymnasium as enthusiastic high-school boys and girls assume, in their own eyes, a place of great importance in the community, in assembling to cheer for their teams. And when it is observed that their

<sup>1</sup> The term "youth" is here used with its usual indefinite meaning. All the so-called "younger generation" from high-school age upward are meant to be included. That is why certain activities which are characteristic not only of youth but of mature single men have been overlapped.



number is often augmented by over two hundred and fifty men, women, and children, the place of basket-ball during the winter months can be seen to be of no small importance in the community. As a matter of fact, the desire to attend a basket-ball game is readily accepted as a valid excuse for being absent from almost any other function.

During such winters as are consistently cold there is also much skating. Then in spring the high-school boys devote themselves to track and field sports until the middle of May, when the state interscholastic track meet takes place at the state university. To attend this track meet as an athlete or as a spectator is one of the cherished ambitions of high-school life.

Summer finds little in the line of sports in Mineville. Formerly, baseball was a prominent pastime but it has now passed into the discard, for the most part, leaving little of sports for youth beyond swimming, which is rarely indulged in by any excepting young men and boys. During hot summer afternoons and evenings one regularly sees automobile loads of young men going or coming from Deep Lake, about ten miles distant. Even the small boys prefer this lake to the old swimming holes of Stone Creek—seeking the latter merely because they do not have automobiles.

#### THE RÔLE OF SEX

Nothing gives the elders of the community greater concern and no subject is of more conspicuous interest to the youth than sex. The conventions and taboos surrounding this aspect of life, however, make it difficult to investigate and present.

It has been suggested that a main cause for the decline of interest in summer sports among the young men of Mine-

ville is in the changed relations of the sexes. An athletic young Mineviller observes:

The fellows have no pep around here anymore. Every evening they used to turn out for baseball but now you never can get enough of them together for a game. They'd rather take a car and go swimming at Deep Lake, and I'll admit that swimming is more refreshing. But I think the main thing is that everybody has automobiles these days and the fellows would rather take some "Jane" out in the country alongside the road and have a petting party. They all say that summer is the time to do your stuff and you've got to have an automobile to get much. Petting is a seasonal pleasure all right. It's too cold around here most of the year to do it and be comfortable. It's a good thing it is too cold in winter or we might not have basket-ball. I don't know what this world is coming to when sex causes young fellows to lose interest in sports. Boy, I like baseball! But there isn't much very exciting around here for me excepting the girls and they're pretty dumb. I'll have to be leaving. I've got a date with Daisy in ten minutes. Not much of a date but it will do in a pinch.

Theoretically, petting may be said to be love-making which is intended to stop short of normal fulfilment. In most cases, however, it resolves itself into an attempt at seduction on the part of the young man, and, one may conjecture, an effort of the girl to secure a maximum of satisfaction without actually succumbing to the passion with which she is playing—a struggle which she often loses.

When a new girl of reasonable attractiveness comes to town the young men vie with one another in attempting to "date her out," for as yet her petting inclinations are an unknown quantity. But if she proves to be "slow," the news is quickly passed around and she is likely to find her popularity very much on the wane.

The popularity of a girl may be measured by her appeal to certain good-looking, well-dressed young fellows who are much admired by girls in general. As a rule these fellows are

not regarded to have highly admirable ideals upon sex matters. Of the present crop Waldon Fulton is the "Rudolph Valentino." Thrice ousted from the state university because of low scholarship, this ne'er-do-well young fellow is an idol of the girls and an object of disgust among most of the adult population. A typical rating of him by an adult is the following by Axel Peters: "So that young Fulton is back in town? He's no good at all. The height of his ambition is to take out some girl like the Channing girl and you know what that means."

The varying degrees of power which different young men have over girls are well known among them. Maynard Stephens (age twenty-five) complains: "I used to take girls out too but I never got very far. That made me sore because I knew other guys were getting away with murder by just going out for a walk with them, while I couldn't get anywhere with my car and a lot of money."

Robert Renn (age twenty-four), one of the community's three reputed male virgins of his age, also feels that he is not adept at seduction. Robert, who received most of his sex experience while away at college, said: "I've done petting galore but that's been my limit. Sometimes I probably could have gone the limit with them but I was always uninclined or too green."

The following is a young fellow's description of his first "date" with a girl who is a pride of church ladies:

Charmine is a nice girl but I think she would go with anybody. She's got a date to the dance with Albert Cluff for Friday night. When she will go with Albert it looks pretty much as if she will go with anyone. And besides she told me she had a mugging party with Bill Stoddin the other night.

I don't like that. I want a girl all to myself. You know, girls like

Mary Lindon are good looking but it would turn my stomach to kiss them. I'm not the kind that can kiss everybody.

She [Charmine] kissed me all over the face and on my neck and even on my chest. I never saw a girl act like that.

I didn't enjoy myself with her last night.

But more petting parties followed and finally consummation. The practice of petting for satisfaction and its tendency to lapse into the final act with the gradual breaking-down of inhibitions are well illustrated in this case—and the community was ignorant of the private drama.

The precise extent to which illicit relations are indulged in by the young people is difficult to estimate. There are not many of the youth who are not suspected by someone to have broken the moral code, at least once. A Main Street merchant is responsible for the following statement:

It's getting pretty bad when five high-school girls had to go to Gold last year because they were "in the family way." I call that pretty bad. And it was still worse the year before. They tell me that twelve or thirteen girls went to Gold the year before last. There's no doubt about it when a half-dozen of them have "appendicitis" operations at once.

Mineville has a steady crop of girls who are reputed to be "loose." "Everyone" in town knows who they are, and if a young man is seen regularly in the company of one of them his evil intentions are taken for granted. These girls are usually quite popular. All of them of recent years have mended their ways in time and have achieved ordinary reputations as wives and mothers.

No Mineville girl has ever frankly been a professional prostitute unless she has done so in another town. When a Mineville man or boy has patronized one of the few who have turned to that vocation he has been deeply impressed by having such ready access to a girl he knows so well. In

one case a local foreigner encountered a Mineville girl who was following the crimson path in Gold. Her attraction for him was greatly enhanced by the contrast between their social positions at home. In the end, however, he had the unfortunate experience of contracting syphilis which almost took his life, merely because he trusted a Mineville girl. He said that he "could not believe that Madge would not be clean."

Prior to 1918 the prostitutes of Mineville lived in an alley back of Main Street. Since prostitution has become unlawful, the occasional women who have come to town with a view of following that vocation have not been able to conceal their activities from the town as a whole, and so wrathful portions of the public have soon demanded that they leave town. In August, 1930, when there were two middle-aged prostitutes doing an unprosperous business in the town, the following conversation occurred between two young men in a pool hall:

A: Have you seen those two birds?

B: Not yet. What are they like?

A: They are about the most unattractive things you ever saw. I wouldn't touch one of them even if they charged nothing. God, they are terrible! So dirty and old! A fellow might get almost any kind of disease from them.

B: No wonder I haven't seen them. When a good one comes to town everybody knows it and she gets run out of town in a hurry. When a bum one comes they let her stay longer because she doesn't do enough business to cause any excitement.

A: You're right. These birds are pretty optimistic to think they are going to make a living here. They will be starved out.

B: Boy! a couple of good ones could do a big business in this town, and I don't see why we shouldn't have them. The guys only go to Gold or Smelters now. It costs lots more that way—but they go.



A: Anybody with common sense knows that the town would be better off with about three or four of them—young ones that were examined about twice a week so they would be safe.

Visits to the Smelters or Gold brothels usually are made by a party of young fellows rather than by single individuals. Long before the boys have reached the age at which they actually patronize prostitutes, they have had a thorough hearsay knowledge of them because of the abundance of sex stories characteristic of a mining camp. Some of them have heard of brothels in China, the South Seas, Panama, Mexico, and Cuba. One man, for instance, told of having seen Mexican Catholic prostitutes cross themselves before giving their bodies to a customer, and also that he had seen them kneel at an altar before and after the act.

There may, indeed, be some truth to the rather sensational statement that "God made the country, man made the city, and the devil made the small town." But perhaps it is merely because events are so conspicuous in the small town that its moral shortcomings stand out so clearly as compared with those of the city. In the city it is easy for one to remain oblivious of what is going on about him by seeing only one side of the lives of the people with whom he associates, but in Mineville he sees many sides of their lives and so he is not deceived.

There is, of course, much talk in Mineville as to whether the young people are "worse than they used to be." And most older folks seem to agree that "things are worse." Only one man in town was encountered who did not believe that the abolition of the redlight district has had much to do with present alleged sexual license. In the Deep Thinkers' Club there was almost unanimity of agreement when Judge Burfee said: "Abolition of the redlight district has made



prostitutes of decent women." Still, the much-lamented petting appears to be but old-fashioned "love-making" with greater promiscuity, more tendency to go to extremes, and increased openness of conduct. And there is no shortage of Minevillers who believe that greater frankness is the only significant change that time has wrought in the matter. When it is suggested that the automobile facilitates sex diversions at the present day, these older residents reply: "It wasn't very hard to get out of the city limits during the horse-and-buggy days."

Those signs in the situation which are generally thought to be wholesome receive comparatively little comment. The few quiet, old-fashioned love affairs arouse amusement and excite some gossip but even they are likely to be under suspicion of not being so old-fashioned after all.

JOHN: There's Frank and Mary. They're together all the time. Aren't they quiet and sensible? He gets all upset if she even smokes. They'll be getting married one of these days.

CLARENCE: I don't see what she sees in that fellow but it does look as if they may get married. I've seen and heard things though, and so I don't believe they are so slow as you think.

Most of the conspicuous love affairs in Mineville at any one time are recognized as cases of "puppy love." Townsfolk smile at them (when they do not frown), but to the youth they are serious matters. A high-school girl who had no beau and apparently wished one may be cited:

Aren't Jim and Alicia crazy about each other? He sure loves her hard right there in school.

Yes, there is a lot of it. Cullen and Georgia, Douglas and Frances, Harry and Emma, Elsie and Bryan, and a few others sit together every day at noon and love each other like everything. I try not to look at it. I can't study with that going on around me.

There are a number of very "good" boys and very "good" girls in Mineville. Like the preacher, they have a peculiar status. The "good girl" suffers the common fate of members of minority groups in the small town. That is, there is so small a variety of persons of her own type that she is often unable to find a satisfactory chum, much less a whole group in which her "ideals" are appreciated. Then, to make her situation less fortunate, there are few diversions, aside from those of the majority, which might attract her. She is highly conscious of what "the rest of the kids are doing," and she knows that they are aware of her general conduct. If she does not attend the weekly dances because she does not wish to, she knows that she is thought to be peculiar by the younger set, and if she cannot attend because of parental restraint, she knows that they feel sorry for her. For besides the movies and occasional high-school affairs there is little excitement in the town that is conventionally approved for the youth, the dances being the high points. As a result one good girl who was not permitted to attend dances said: "I wish I lived in a city where I could do a few things that my folks would not find out."

Even though Mineville has a rather unfavorable moral reputation, we are unable to say that interest in sex among the youth is greater than in the small towns of the surrounding region. In explanation of the strong interest which exists we can only suggest the effect of the prevailing mood of the times, which is due to the automobile and many other factors; the rather lax moral temper that seems to be characteristic of mining camps which are subject to great booms and depressions and hence to much disorganization; and, finally, the weakness of extra-curricular appeals in the schools, and the lack of programs of wide appeal for young people in the churches or elsewhere in the community.

## DANCING, DRINKING, AND SMOKING

Mineville's young people say that dancing occupies a very prominent part in their lives because there is "nothing else to do in a small town." Within the radius of an automobile ride of thirty miles they may attend one or more dances each week. Of the older and more sedate folks who sometimes swell attendance at local dances to a figure of from three to five hundred, few make a practice of seeking dances out of town.

Even fifty years ago the dance was a red-letter occasion to the youth. Old-timers tell of riding from forty to fifty miles in a buggy or of walking thirty miles to Sand Creek and back in order to trip the light fantastic. As an institution, dancing has undergone modifications with the passing of time. The dance until daylight is now forbidden by a city ordinance which sets the time limit at midnight, although all-night dances still take place in the country and in the small towns near by. Then, since the war, and the advent of prohibition, dances have brought troublesome problems of law enforcement in that they are taken as occasions for becoming intoxicated by a large number of youth and grown-ups.

That "a fellow can't have a good time at a dance without a drink or two" is a popular opinion among the young men as well as among a number of the girls. As a result, the sheriff usually is very busy escorting young men to jail on dance nights, and it is not uncommon for a girl or woman to become intoxicated to the point of unconsciousness. This last, however, is material for scandal if it becomes known.

The process of "getting a drink" at a dance is painfully in evidence. For, when a group of young fellows is seen leaving the hall during the dance, bareheaded and without their top-

coats, one may be almost certain that they are going downstairs to an automobile or to a moonshine joint, for a drink. Or, even when girls or women with a certain sort of reputation are seen to leave in the same manner with escorts, the object of their temporary leave-taking is a matter of little doubt to the onlooker.

The majority of persons in attendance at almost any of the dances are, of course, very sober and look with disfavor upon the conduct of the drinkers. But a drunken girl is never seen unattended by some young fellow, for she is then an easy prospect for seduction. The Sage girls are the most notorious in town in this respect. Cliff Sterrett has the following to say about these girls and another of their type:

Adeline was sure drunk at the dance the other night. She was limp. God, she was drunk!

They aren't necessarily harder to dance with when they're drunk. Dora is easier to dance with when she's drunk.

I saw a fellow in the dark with Eloise when she was dead drunk one night. Eloise might have known what he was doing but I doubt it.

Among most of the mature persons in attendance at dances in Mineville, the sexual element may be assumed to play a relatively small part in the enjoyment of the dance, but among the youth this does not seem to be true. The young men tend to dance with those girls who have "sex appeal" for them, and so out of several hours of dancing they are almost certain to have one dance in which sex is the paramount experience of the dance.

Very little is done to restrict improper dancing in Mineville. Persons who engage in such exhibitions give interesting testimony. Some of them vigorously resent the suggestion that they have vulgar intent and assert that they "don't know how to dance any other way." Others frankly admit

that they derive sex stimulation occasionally, and even frequently, in this way. A mild illustration may be had in the case of a man who has assumed positions of prominence in the community. About five years ago he engaged in a sensuous dance with Mrs. Warren Hagen (age twenty-three years), now a mother of two children and apparently very much "settled down." Of the incident he said:

It's pretty tough when a woman sets out to see what she can do with a fellow. I was dancing with Mrs. Warren Hagen just before she was married and she made me darned uncomfortable. When I decided we'd better dance at arm's length she let me know that I wasn't the only one she had teased into doing the same thing that evening. And you'd be surprised if I told you who the other fellow was. He's quite sedate.

In regard to his other experiences of the same sort he remarked:

My wife won't let me dance with Mrs. Nixon because of the way she dances. It's darned strange because she associates with Mrs. Nixon herself.

The worst one I ever danced with was Christina Stearns.<sup>1</sup> She had a peculiar way of dancing. The longer a fellow danced with her the more he felt it. I never thought she meant a thing by it but that only made things worse because I was afraid she would discover my feelings and lose her respect for me. She may have understood the whole thing and have known she was to blame but I didn't care to take a chance. I liked it but it was too much for me.

It's a strange thing. In all the years I've been dancing only about a half-dozen girls have done that to me. I'm generally unaware of sex at a dance. Some of the fellows at our dances don't seem to be aware of anything else. If I danced like they do, there would be war when I got home.

Numerous similar cases might be cited, but a more convincing proof of the general effect of sex stimulation at the

<sup>1</sup> One of the most respected girls in town in the last twenty-five years.



dances is the fact that prior to the passing of the Mineville redlight district, the prostitutes did their most rushing business following dances (aside from pay day). Nowadays this aroused desire is likely to find expression in a petting party which, of course, varies in kind according to the persons involved. With the aid of an automobile and the device of leaving the dance an hour or so early, a girl can "pull a wild party" and still return home at a time which does not arouse the suspicion of her parents.

Much of the most notorious dancing and drinking of young people occurs in roadhouses, which may easily be frequented without the knowledge of parents. Moonshine joints exclude boys of high-school age, but to no avail, since older fellows or curb-vendors are at hand to supply strong drink. In the pool halls young boys are allowed to gamble, and some of them become "suckers" for the tricky local professionals at an early age. The following young man illustrates the psychology of the "sucker":

Gambling is what is responsible for most of the "broke" young guys. God! I love to gamble! A guy just doesn't think when he is gambling or he wouldn't do it. He knows when he starts that he doesn't get a fifty-fifty break and yet he does it anyway. It's like the dope habit the way it gets you. I've kept away from it lately but I suppose I'll weaken sooner or later.

There's a gambler. He's one of the big stockholders in the mine at Copperton. He's from San Francisco—and I don't know how he got his money. But, I suppose he stole it, more than likely. He's a parasite; you can see that. A good day's work would kill him. He's got that big car and a lot of money just because there are a lot of damned fools like me who will play with him.

Yes, he is a Jew. He and Ace Laylor are running a game. The chances are 70 per cent in favor of the house and 30 per cent in favor of the individual gambler and yet there is no shortage of victims. You can see how gambling gets one because I don't know anyone who plays who doesn't know that chances are against him. The only way to protect yourself from that sort of instinct is not to start.



Smoking, once a vice even for boys, is now indulged in freely by girls at an early age. Twelve-year-old Clara Lane states that the girl of her age who does not smoke is an exception. Clara, a very sincere girl of the seventh grade, frankly told her mother that she does not know what to do about smoking because "all the girls smoke" and she seems to be an outcast because she does not.

#### "BUNCHES OF OLDER KIDS"

The term "bunch" is used to refer to any group in Mineville, and so all of the youth roughly feel that they belong to certain "bunches," however much the binding ties may vary in different cases. The two largest bunches are the "grade-school bunch" and the "high-school bunch," between which there is a sharp line of demarcation. Then there is the class group which depends upon grade in school. Because these loosely knit class groups tend to have the same membership throughout the eight- or twelve-year periods of school life, identification with them involves much sentiment in after-years. In speaking of their youthful days of fifty years ago, old-timers fondly speak of "our bunch"—and this is mainly the class group as a rule.

The most closely knit "bunches" or cliques are formed around a core of similarity in moral ideals. This is recognized by the high-school principal, who makes the following observations of his students: "The only cliques are based upon different standards of morality—that is, different moral ideals. This fact is very plain. You can notice it yourself at the dances."

A scandalous clique of girls was graduated in the class of 192—. The following autumn this clique was lost to the town when four of its five members left town in order to continue their educations. "Bunches" come and go among

Mineville's youth, but only about once in four years does one secure the notoriety which this one attained. A very mild statement of some of the activities of the group is the following by the assistant principal of the grade school:

You heard about the gang of girls at the high school and the parties they used to pull?

Lizzie Dugan, Selma Merkle, Darline Stone, and Ella Card were pulling drinking parties in an empty house below Price's. It was the talk of the town. Old man Card got wind of it and when he tried to scold Ella she told him he had no room to talk because of his relations with Mrs. Marsh.

At the same time there was another important clique in the high school, remnants of which still remained a year later. This clique was made up of various sets of sweet-hearts. Mutual recognition of equality in prestige brought the members together—the prestige of having “steady company.” To outsiders the group seemed to take a great deal of pride in its self-sufficiency.

The social scale is always prominent in the grade and high schools. In most cases, however, the personal attributes of the children and youth rather than their family connections seem to be the dominating factors in determining the esteem in which they hold one another. Children and youth whose families stand near the bottom of the community social scale often hold envied social positions among those of their own ages. And even though they come from “four hundred” or “near four hundred” families, they may be virtually social outcasts if they do not symbolize the ideals of the youth groups. Family is an important factor but only one in many.

What may be called the “four hundred” bunch of the high school is composed of individuals widely diverse in family status. Of its members, the two Brill girls come from low

social stratum, Maggie O'Neil from the "four hundred," Millard Nolan from the middle class, Verna Morgan from the "near four hundred," Milton Trent from the middle class, etc. In the spring of 1929 Maggie O'Neil "gave a party" for this bunch and those invited or not invited felt keenly the discrimination in their favor or against them.

Besides the bunches mentioned there are many others, both in and out of school. There is the Red Lantern Bunch, the Sage Bunch, the Swede Bunch, etc., etc. In all cases, age and "moral ideals" are very important selective factors in the determination of membership.

#### SERIOUS AMBITIONS

A complete study of the vocational interests of the youth cannot be made here, but a good index may be had by a study of the vocations selected by graduates of Crystal County High School, who sought higher education, over the ten-year period from 1918 to 1927 inclusive. During that period there were 162 graduates. The vocations of those having completed a four-year college course or more are as follows:

TABLE X

Medical doctor.....	2
Dentist.....	2
Teachers.....	12
Mechanical engineer.....	2
Chemical engineer.....	1
Electrical engineer.....	1
Journalist.....	2
Other.....	4

---

26 (or about 16 per cent)

Those with some but less than four years of college training are:

TABLE XI

Teachers (two-year normal)	11
Druggist (two-year course).	2
Some college training. . . . .	19
Still in college. . . . .	8
	<hr/>
	40 (or about 25 per cent)

Thus, with about 41 per cent of its high-school graduates over a ten-year period having finished or attempted some sort of college training, the community has every reason to feel that the youth, on the whole, have serious vocational interests. The number of professional people who emerge from Mineville is far too large to find employment in the little town. Although the town has produced no clergymen, within fifteen years it has produced three physicians, six lawyers, and many other professional people.

But intimacy and the lack of opportunities at home cause Mineville to lose the cream of the potential leaders among its youth. Practically all the professional men in town have been recruited from outside the community. A native boy who substituted for the local physician for a week found that his professional airs tended to be treated with amusement, and one who substituted for the dentist became so embittered at the lack of respect for his ability that he never cares to see the town again. Most of the young men agree with a home boy who said:

A fellow has no future here. There is nothing to aspire to. There are about a half-dozen good jobs in town and the chances that a fellow would have one of those twenty years from now are very slim. A fellow might not get anywhere by leaving town but at least he has a chance. Unless your Dad gives you a mine, or a stock ranch, or a business, you are hopeless in this town. There are just a few opportunities and they are all cornered. You are almost sure to be working in these mines and

mills or making no more than a bare living at something else if you stay here. I'm going to leave because they don't respect home boys here, anyway.

Young men in Mineville complain a great deal at the lack of opportunities in their town. Those who do not go elsewhere for opportunities are prone to live their whole lifetimes in the home community and to blame the town for their own lack of initiative. The town, however, seems to be doing its share to crowd the professions. And so, whatever the extent of the deadening effect of the "Mineville sleeping sickness" upon the ambitions of youth, it does not always prove fatal.

The movement of youth from Mineville to the outside world is shown in the fact that of the 162 high-school graduates from 1918 to 1927, 100 have departed from the county, or had done so before their deaths. It is the one-third of the youth who do not finish high school who are most likely to be marooned in Mineville, but even they show a strong tendency to leave. A large number of children of immigrants swells their total. Some of them leave and return at intervals, largely according to the conditions of the local employment situation.

The automobile has greatly facilitated the contact of Mineville's young people with those of neighboring towns. This may have much to do with their marked tendency to marry outsiders. Other factors are the small variety of eligible persons at home; the large proportion of young men who, as the people say, "are not the marrying kind" and hence cause the girls to look elsewhere for a mate; the need of most girls to leave town in order to secure employment; and the perhaps greater inclination of persons to be romantic about strangers than about persons who have become com-

monplace through lifelong acquaintanceship. A measure of this tendency toward exogamy may best be had through a study of marriages discussed in the *Mineville Mail*, since licenses are frequently secured out of town. Over a three-year period beginning July 1, 1928, fifty-four marriages were discussed. Considered with reference to whether or not the parties to them were home-towners, newcomers (in the community less than three years), former residents, or outsiders, the facts brought out are as shown in Table XII.

TABLE XII

Mineville boy with Mineville girl.....	7
Former resident boy with former resident girl.....	2
Mineville boy with outside girl.....	3
Mineville girl with outside boy.....	13
Mineville boy with newcomer.....	1
Mineville girl with newcomer.....	3
Newcomer boy with outsider.....	4
Newcomer with newcomer.....	1
Former resident boy with outsider.....	9
Former resident girl with outsider.....	9

The ages of the parties were not given, but it may be said that only two of the marriages involved Minevillers who were over forty years of age. Most of the Minevillers were twenty-five years of age or under, with the majority of the girls twenty-one years of age or less. Because the three home boys who married outside girls established residence in Mineville, the town gained three young women; but, on the other hand, it lost thirteen of its own young women who went to make their homes at the places of their husbands' residence. The figures also suggest that the girls have a stronger tendency to marry than the boys. In fact, Mineville always has produced many bachelors as compared with the number of



its "old maids." Perhaps this is partly because being an old maid carries a peculiar stigma since there is little opportunity for women to obtain work in town. Also the old maid in Mineville cannot avoid constant association with girlhood chums who are married and hence she is readily made to feel that she is not a member of the select fraternity of desirable women. Whereas the men have pool halls and moonshine joints which function somewhat as bachelor's clubs, there are no old maid's clubs in which the single women can retire and gloat over their single blessedness.

## CHAPTER XIV

### ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHER GROUPS

The vast number of groups to be found in the small town of Mineville is almost startling. Here we can only pretend to indicate general classes, to characterize some of the groups which have not been discussed elsewhere, or to throw additional light upon others.

#### ORGANIZATIONS

A frequent complaint of Minevillers is that their town has too many organizations. The difficulty is that "a few people belong to all of the organizations" while the rest specialize on informal group activities. And so those who have the habit of belonging to organizations are likely to be overworked and hence to complain, while anyone else who wishes to have their company for business, social, or any other reasons is characteristically met with the perennial excuse, "Sorry! I've got a meeting of the Masonic lodge for this evening."

#### LODGES

Fraternal orders and their auxiliaries comprise the largest and most prominent class of groups in the community which are generally called "organizations." Not only socially but in business and in politics they make themselves felt. A man newly starting in business can do no better than to join one of the larger orders at once, and to have his wife seek the largest women's group. Local politicians frankly count on the advantage of membership in fraternal orders.

With sixteen fraternal orders or auxiliaries active at the

present time, it is not strange that Minevillers say that their town is "lodge ridden." Table XIII shows the lodge calendar.

TABLE XIII

Organization	Date of Founding	No. Members	No. Members in Community	Usual Attendance	No. Present at Largest Annual Event	Meetings per Month	Months with No Meetings
Royal Arch							
Masons.....	1890	86	33	15	90	2	2
A.F. & A.M....	1867	126	72	30	150-300	2	2
Eastern Star...	1890	167	115	25	150	2	2
Rainbow Girls.	1926	25	25	9	75	2	2
Demolay.....	1930	20	20	15	.....	2	.....
Woodcraft.....	1900	97	50	20	35	1	.....
Past Guardian's Club.....		12	12	12	12	1	.....
Woodmen*.....		20	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Women's Benefit Assoc.....	1902	57	30	12	30	1	.....
Westway Club.	1928	.....	.....	12	30	1	.....
Yeomen.....	1892	37	26	4	.....	2	.....
Redmen.....	1901	85	70	25	150	2	.....
Pocahontas....	1910	128	80	35	150	2	.....
Odd Fellows†..	1879	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Rebeccas†.....	1894	16	12	5	.....	2	3
Sons of Herman	1902	28	20	8	50	1	.....
Alpine Rose...	1916	12	12	9	50	1	.....
Knights of Pythias.....	1887	100	70	20	90	2	.....
Pythian Sisters	1923	26	20	14	90	2	2
Foresters*.....	1895	.....	3	.....	.....	.....	.....
Degree of honor	1889	13	13	None	.....	.....	.....

\* No longer hold meetings.

† Membership transferred to Smelters in 1930. Have group consciousness but do not hold meetings.

Each active fraternal order has its devoted adherents who may be counted on to carry the burden of responsibility for the staging of gala occasions, for conducting the ritual, and for the numerous small duties upon which the success of an organization so often depends. In the marked overlapping of membership it is noticeable that certain persons tend to hold offices in more than one order. Most of these leaders are not mercenary because the sacrifices involved are generally too great to compensate for the probable gains. They are known to have deep sentimental attachments for their organizations. Intense rivalries and animosities arise in connection with attainment of positions of dominance and in relation to organization policies.

In numbers and in prestige the Masonic group stands highest in town. Persons who are easily admitted to the other fraternal organizations frequently find themselves "black-balled" when they seek membership in a Masonic group. The casualties of "black-balling," however, are reduced by a realization on the part of many people that for them to attempt to gain membership would be futile.

Established in 1867, when the closest railway was hundreds of miles away by stagecoach, the local Masonic chapter has always played an important part in the life of the town. Several members, now living, were inducted into the cherished ranks nearly fifty years ago and many have been active for over a quarter of a century. The Masonic Hall is the finest building on Main Street. For towns of Mineville's size, it is said to be without an equal in the state. It is a symbol of the influence of the Masons in the community.

Excepting the Masonic group, the general trend has been for fraternal orders to lose in strength. Several are practically dead or are slowly dying. Departure of their best leadership during extended periods of economic depression has

been instrumental in weakening once vigorous organizations. Other important factors have been internal friction, and the sudden raising of dues in order to provide sound actuarial bases. But the weakening of fraternal groups in general seems to be due mainly to the strong competition offered by commercial insurance companies and to the fact that the radio, the automobile, and the motion picture have provided new ways of spending leisure time in the once much-isolated little town.

Some fraternal orders do not attempt to hold meetings during the summer, and most of them are likely to have difficulty in attracting a quorum during that season. But during the long season of poor weather they thrive. In winter many men feel as does Jack Walker who declared, "I like to go up and sit around and smoke and be sociable." Genuine interest in ritual and insignia appears to be strongest in the Masonic bodies, where much prestige is had by those persons who are experts in playing their parts; but in every fraternal order the great majority of members breathe a sigh of relief when the formal rites are over. Like a group of school children who have been anxiously waiting for the gong, Mineville's fraternal brethren fall noisily to card-playing, gossiping, or "getting the eats ready," after having performed their ritual with great external solemnity. This is not to say, however, that there are not persons, particularly among the Masons, to whom the performance of the ritual is virtually a religious practice. In fact, some of the Masons openly state that Masonry is their "substitute for going to church."

#### CIVIC SERVICE AND PATRIOTIC ORGANIZATIONS

*The Rotary Club.*—Since its inception in 1923, the Mineville Rotary Club has fluctuated between fifteen and twenty-

three members. Most of the time its membership has numbered about nineteen. It is one of the smallest of the some three thousand Rotary clubs in the world—second smallest for a while. The general consensus of opinion in town is that Mineville is too small to support a Rotary Club. Even so, the establishment of a rival service club was only frustrated by clever propaganda on the part of the Rotarians.

TABLE XIV

Organization	Date of Founding	No. Members	Usual Attendance	Meetings per Month
American Legion . . . . .	1920	20	15	1
American Legion Auxiliary .	1925	25	22	2
Rotary Club . . . . .	1923	17	16	4
Woman's Club . . . . .	1913	36	12	2
Band . . . . .	1879	23	21	8
Fireman's Club . . . . .	1892	37	18	1
Boy Scouts . . . . .	1929	26	15	4
Red Cross Society . . . . .	1915	179	5	Optional
Crystal County Stock Protection Assoc. . . . .	1896	40	35	(Annual meeting)

The Mineville Rotary Club is not a strong organization. The community has been anticipating its disintegration for several years and its own members are often apprehensive lest such a catastrophe occur. So, when the new president takes his office each July he is not envied his task of "trying to hold the Club together."

At Club meetings "the fellows" are externally very congenial and do much joking at the expense of one another. Two or three members play the rôle of goats, that is, for its entertainment the membership as a whole habitually directs remarks toward them. The remarks occasion so much laughter that the goat usually fails to distinguish clearly be-



tween ridicule, sarcasm, and harmless jocularly. There have been rather pathetic cases in which some of these men who were really very unpopular have imagined that they were popular merely because they were continually in the limelight at Club meetings.

It is no secret in the Club or in town gossip that there is rather serious friction between some of the members due to social and business matters. Still, the sacrifices which some of the members make for the Club seem to indicate that they are not falsifying when they speak in glowing terms of the satisfaction they derive from Rotary. For several years one member even donated the use of his rather spacious office for Club meetings, and each summer he is host to the members and their wives at a meeting which is held at his rustic summer home.

Although the Club takes its importance quite seriously and most of its members taken individually are influential in Mineville's affairs, the Club itself is not especially valuable to the community in so far as the ordinary resident knows. Only a few members receive general recognition for their extraordinary public spirit. The people demand to know of tangible accomplishments for community betterment which can be accredited to the Club. They do not seem to realize that the Club is not supposed formally to take sides on issues. Misunderstanding of the function of the organization and a general knowledge of the discrepancy between its ideals and the known practices of a few of its members cause it to bear the brunt of harsh criticism. The following discussion is illustrative:

MAIN STREET MERCHANT: Are you a Rotarian? Well, that's a great organization to belong to. What the hell good does it do anyhow?

Let me tell you what that guy Stone did to me, and he is president of the club. He comes to me and says, "Why don't you sell that property you got in Roselle?" I says, "I'm willin' to sell it for \$700—what I paid for it." Then, Stone comes around a few days later and says he has a buyer for my property but the fellow is poor and can't afford to pay much, so I says, "All right, Tom, I'll let it go for \$600." And who in hell did the poor buyer turn out to be but the Copper Mining Company! If that ain't a rotten trick, I'd like to know what you would call it. He's a great guy to be giving you a talk on good fellowship, he is!

A MINER: My brother tried to get that job painting Waite's building but Waite got outside painters. He's a fine one to be talking about boosting your own community.

A SKILLED WORKER: Yes, McCall is another Rotarian and this is what he did. He had the papers made out for \$12,000, \$12,000, and \$4,500 when he bought those mining claims from Mrs. Harris, and when she told him she would have to have \$7,000 for the last claim he said, "All right, Mrs. Harris, I'll be back this afternoon." When he came back he had that claim raised to \$7,000 and Mrs. Harris signed without noticing that he had lowered one of the \$12,000 claims to \$9,500. That's \$2,500 gone in a twinkling of an eye.

MAIN STREET MERCHANT: Let me tell you about another Rotarian—that guy Madison. He hired outsiders to tar his roof but you ought to see the article he had in the *Mail* about trading at home. He sure hollers if you buy a cent's worth out of town and he doesn't even hire home labor.

Disdain or lack of respect for the Club on the part of desirable members who refuse to join has diminished its prestige and has weakened the internal strength of the group by making it feel that it is more seeking than sought after. Some Minevillers sneer at it because they think of it as an organization of snobs. They resent its claim of being democratic when only a limited few are able to gain admittance to its ranks and members of the "four hundred" tend to dominate the group.

The heralded "service above self" ideal of the Rotary Club does not impress the ordinary Mineviller who says, "It is a self-service club" or "It is a self-admiration society," or who asks, "What kind of business does it do anyway? It's mostly a matter of getting together and eating anyway! Isn't it?" Even a county official who must be careful lest he antagonize voters remarked, "What does it do if it is not purely selfish?" But a former president of the Club sees the situation more clearly:

Our Club encourages service. A fellow can't listen to all of that talk about service without being affected by it at some time or other. The members of our Club are human beings and I don't see any reason for assuming that they are more selfish than other human beings. "Service above self" is an ideal. People don't live up to ideals; they only try to approach them—and Rotarians are human. Too human!

Some of our fellows have pulled pretty raw tricks, I'll admit. But a lot of these people around town who are kicking would have done the same if they had had the chance. Rotarians are likely to be in a position to have the chance; that's where the rub comes.

The emptiness and triviality of Rotary programs are also matters of criticism. Mencken-like folks who ridicule the small talk and superficiality of Rotary meetings are not lacking in Mineville—in fact, they are plentiful. In answer to Perry Roberts, who was persistently poking fun at the Club, Mr. Dollard, a recent president, said:

Now, Perry, the trouble with you is that you weren't asked to join. We have a good bunch and you'd be surprised how intelligent our members are, as a whole. I gave them a talk on oil flotation, and although they could not have understood all I said, I could tell, from the discussion which followed, that they had a fair grasp of what I was talking about. Now, I gave them a choice of a light or a heavy topic at yesterday's meeting, and by silent consent they chose the light, as I knew they would. But that's no reflection against their intelligence.

No, Perry, we have a good bunch and I don't think it is a reflection against my intelligence that I enjoy the company of my fellow-Rotarians, inside and outside of meetings. What I can't understand is how you "intelligent" critics suppose that service clubs can pick their members from the prominent men of communities and escape accidentally getting hold of an intelligent one once in awhile.

Mr. Dollard and several other members of the Mineville Rotary Club are by no means Babbit-like boost-your-own-town fanatics. They play the booster rôle in Club meetings but elsewhere they meet the situation squarely, finding fault where it is due. They illustrate well that the much-caricatured Rotarian who never has an original idea and who thrives on superficialities is largely a myth. Indeed, Mineville Rotarians sometimes have difficulty in keeping one another awake during a dry and superficial program.

*The Woman's Club.*—The Woman's Club occupies somewhat the same position among the women of the community that the Rotary does among men. That is, only a selected few are eligible to membership. Like the Rotary, it often appears to be on the brink of disintegration, and yet it persists from year to year—owing in large measure to the perseverance of the elected leaders. But there is no official connection between the two clubs and practically no co-operation.

While women conceded to be at the top of the social hierarchy were holding the offices of the Woman's Club, the group thrived; to be within its ranks was a coveted honor. But during the last few years the "four hundred" women have been losing interest and have refused to accept offices. This indifference has been imitated by most of the membership and the group has become weakened proportionately.

With thirty-six members, the Woman's Club often has difficulty in securing a quorum attendance of seven. Its life is very spasmodic. If a meeting is in the form of a combination business meeting and tea at the residence of one of the élite, a 100 per cent turnout is not uncommon. On the other hand, the meeting immediately following is likely to have a minimum attendance if it is a formal meeting held in the public library, without refreshments—it being taken for granted that “you can't expect people to attend meetings in this town if you don't serve something to eat.”

The typical meeting of the Woman's Club is as devoid of interest as is the typical Rotary meeting. But the better meetings of the ladies must be more pleasure laden than Rotary meetings, for they last longer, have the informality of a home atmosphere, and permit opportunity for much gossiping.

The Woman's Club seems to sponsor most of the charity work in town, and what it does not sponsor is done mainly by its members in the names of fraternal or church organizations. A notable exception to this rule is the Rotary Club which gives financial assistance each year in order to help defray the expense of conducting a health clinic for school children.

*The band.*—Established in 1877, the Mineville band is one of the oldest organizations in town, and perhaps the most virile, at the present time. It practices twice a week, and, as a rule, not more than two of its twenty-three members are absent. There is not another organization in the community that can boast such loyalty. Even the Rotary Club with its emphasis upon attendance and its annual attendance record



of 92 per cent is not strictly comparable, for while it meets but once a week and takes slightly over an hour at each occasion, the band consumes three hours, or the whole evening, twice a week. And besides, the men practice on their instruments at home. The group pride is testified by the fact that the members buy their own instruments. In the cases of John Kaler and his son, Ed, this expenditure was very great for men of small financial means—\$375 being spent by each for sousaphones which are of use only in the band.

The members of the band range from seventy-three-year-old John Kaler, who was a member of the first band in 1877, to boys not yet in high school. They covet their membership, and a number of families are sorely hurt because their boys have not been accepted. Then there is a great deal of jealousy regarding privileges, such as playing first rather than second or third cornet. The conductor's ability and popularity, however, leave his position undisputed.

The band is thoroughly appreciated by the community. This is shown by the generous donations given toward a fund raised for the purpose of purchasing uniforms as well as by the large attendance at band concerts which are held every fortnight during the months of good weather. In public appearance the Mineville "band boys" even surprise strangers from larger towns. Well drilled in their music and attractively uniformed, they fill an indispensable part in community festive and commemorative occasions. On Memorial Day, Fourth of July, and other celebration days the little town resounds with band music for several hours, if not all day. And at picnics such as that of Labor Day and the fish fry, from eight to twelve hundred people are en-



livened as the music echoes along a stream and into a mountain forest.

*The Firemen's Club.*—Mineville has a volunteer Fire Department with a membership which varies between forty and fifty. Theoretically, not everyone is eligible to membership, but in practice no one is excluded. One or two new members are admitted at each monthly business meeting of the "Firemen's Club"—as the Department is called when not at a fire—and about the same number are lost since members are automatically dropped on their third consecutive absence. Many new members do not attend more than once after having paid their admission fee of one dollar. But this is not surprising since the typical firemen's meeting consists of the awkward and slow transacting of small items of business. It is interesting to those who have interests and traditions of the group at heart but is likely to be tiresome to newcomers. If Mencken were to visit one of the meetings and take it as his sample of life in Mineville, he would relegate the whole community to the sphere of the ass.

About eighteen members are present at an average meeting of the Firemen's Club, and perhaps a few more are present at an ordinary fire. But the group never practices, and townsfolk in general are likely to be as useful at fires as any excepting a few members who from long experience have more than the usual knowledge of the fire apparatus.

Most of the money expended by the firemen is secured from dances sponsored by the Club in the Firemen's Hall. Other devices are tried, however, as, for instance, the Wild West rodeo on July 4, 1929, from which over two hundred dollars in profits went to the brigade. Occasionally there is some complaint that the Fire Department should be fi-

nanced by public funds, but most residents never think of such a change. A number of years ago generous donations of the public enabled the purchase of a secondhand fire truck, and of recent years "the boys" have been trying to finish payment on the building which houses this truck. Time after time during the forty years of the Club's existence it has grown weak owing to disagreements, animosities, and other causes, but always the ready influx of new personalities and the leaving of the disgruntled have brought new life to the group.

*The Boy Scouts.*—The Boy Scout movement has had a checkered career in Mineville. Twice it was started, and after a period of flourishing activity it languished and died. The third attempt is now two years old and seems to be successful for the present. The Scouts go to meetings when they wish and stay away when they wish, according to their leader who makes no attempt to force them to attend, but rather tries to make the program sufficiently attractive that they will attend of their own volition. They look forward to hikes into the mountains and to summer camp on one of the beautiful lakes of the surrounding region.

#### SCHOOL ORGANIZATIONS

Grade-School Board	High-School Students' Association
High-School Board	High-School Alumni Association
Student Council	Crystal County Teachers' Association
High-School Orchestra	

The only important group among the school organizations which we have not treated elsewhere is the High School Alumni Association. The Association has dues of fifty cents per year. Some of its leading spirits have that exaggerated

sense of loyalty to Crystal County High School which is characteristic of "old grads" of Harvard and Princeton toward their colleges. The outstanding formal expression of the alumni is the yearly alumni ball—one of the largest dances of the year.

In 1929 the Senior class of the high school produced what was called an *Alumni Annual*. This attractively bound book gave the address of every graduate (if alive) of Crystal County High School from the first class in 1898. The effect of the annual was to heighten the group consciousness of the alumni. But a sad commentary on the ambition of the enterprise is that it resulted in a huge financial loss to the printer.

#### SOCIAL CLUBS

A.Y.I.I. [secret symbols]	Contract Bridge [several clubs]
R.E. Club [secret symbols]	Home Bridge Club
Big Bridge Club	No-Name Bridge Club
Married Folks' Bridge Club	Men's Bridge Club [which specializes on fishing in summer]
Teachers' Club	

*The A.Y.I.I.*—The A.Y.I.I. is a sewing and gossiping club composed of twenty-two women. This club meets every fortnight. Its membership is drawn mainly from the upper middle class of the social hierarchy. The club is avowedly a gossiping, visiting, and talking club—sewing being a pretense.<sup>1</sup>

*The bridge clubs.*—The clubs in this list other than the A.Y.I.I. and the Teachers' Club are bridge clubs.

<sup>1</sup> The A.Y.I.I. disbanded in 1930 after eighteen years of lively existence. Wide variation in the ages, interests, and social positions of a few of its members and monopolization of conversation and leadership by certain vigorous but unpopular women were among the main factors leading to its dissolution. Owing to the intimacy of the community, clubs tend to dissolve rather than to oust undesirable members.

The importance of bridge in the social life of the town has been brought out in the section on the "Social Hierarchy." Here it suffices to say that each of these clubs has a strong group pride and much internal friction, and is organized around social distinctions which are felt very deeply.

#### PUBLIC OFFICERS

Board of County Commissioners

City Council

The Board of County Commissioners is composed of three men. These men have charge of the county budget. Of the public officials of the county they are the most powerful. Since the formation of the county nearly forty years ago most of the county commissioners have been farmers. This may be due, in part, to the fact that farmers, being large taxpayers, are vitally interested in taxes. An additional factor is that farmers are also deeply concerned about the conditions of roads, bridges, etc., and they are more likely to have a county viewpoint than are mining men.

The County Commissioners meet all day during the first Monday and Tuesday of the month, and each member receives eight dollars a meeting for his efforts. On the evening of the first Monday the City Council also holds its monthly session. The mayor or chairman receives five dollars per meeting and each of the six aldermen three dollars. Membership in this group does not carry dignity comparable with that of membership on the Board of County Commissioners. Mayor and councilmen are criticized on every hand and are given little credit for worth-while achievements. Council meetings are often scenes of bitter controversy among councilmen.

#### INTELLECTUAL LIFE

*The Deep Thinkers' Club* would surprise condescending critics of "Main Street." This Club was organized on the

initiative of Principal Burger of the grade school in January, 1929. The scholarly discussions in the group on each fortnight from October to June are highly prized by the membership. From seven to eighteen men are in attendance at each meeting. In the minute book the purpose of the Club is expressed as follows:

The Mineville Deep Thinkers' Club is organized with a view of broadening the intellectual horizons of its members through a frank interchange of opinion and information. One or more members may present a thesis to the remainder of the membership. The topic is then thrown into open-forum discussion in which each member or visitor may feel free to express himself with a frankness not customary in the ordinary course of events.

Among the topics presented have been:

- The Creation Story of the Bible Is as Rational and Scientific as the Theory of Evolution—PRINCIPAL BURGER
- The Divinity of Christ—REV. BLACKWELL
- Companionate Marriage—DR. DIKE [dentist]
- Prohibition—[a debate between Mr. Youlden, a mining-company superintendent, and Allan MacKendre, the iceman]
- Environment and Heredity—DR. DAY [M.D.]
- The President's Daughter [a review of Nan Britton's book by MR. BARTLETT, JR., a chemist]
- Is Democracy a Failure?—"JUDGE" BURFEE [lawyer]
- Psychoanalysis—REV. BLACKWELL
- Farm Relief—MR. BEAL [postmaster]
- The Meaning of Culture [a review of Everett Dean Martin's book by Mr. Burger's brother, a high-school teacher]
- Changing Sex Morality—MR. BARTLETT, JR.
- The Tariff—MR. WINANS [clerk of the court and a lawyer]
- The Ghetto [a discussion based on Wirth's book. One meeting led by MR. DAVIS, a bank clerk, was based upon the Jew in Europe. A second meeting on the Jew in America was led by REV. BLACKWELL]
- The Right To Be Happy [a review of Mrs. Bertrand Russell's book by MR. MACKENDRE, the iceman]
- Primitive Religion—REV. BLACKWELL



The Existence of God—MR. BARTLETT, JR.

Crime [an excellent discussion of crime by MR. CRIMMONS, who for a year was a guard in the state penitentiary. His case studies and interpretations were worthy of a sociologist]

A Book of Prefaces [a review of Mencken's book by PRINCIPAL ROLLWELL]

A Résumé of Chronological Epochs in Our State Tax System—MR. DAYLIGHT [county assessor]

An Economic Interpretation of the U.S. Constitution [a review of Beard's book by MR. BUTLER, the railroad engineer]

The Negro—REV. BLACKWELL and MR. BARTLETT, JR.

The membership and attendance of this Club is made up of men widely diverse in formal education and life-backgrounds. Meetings often wax hot until midnight.

*The male quartet.*—There is a male quartet which is an established part of a large share of local entertainments. It is the usual thing, with a thin man six-feet-three tall, a fat man five-feet-two, a bald-headed man, and a good-looking man.

#### ATHLETIC TEAMS

Basket-ball	Track
Football	Baseball

Membership in athletic teams is a serious affair to those who wish such distinction. Besides the high-school teams there are various "town teams" in basket-ball, and usually one such group can be assembled in football to oppose "the school kids." Baseball is now almost a thing of the past. Formerly much sentiment was held for some athletes. Middle-aged men like fondly to indulge in reminiscence of the fine teams of their day.

#### TEMPORARY AND INFORMAL GROUPS

Aside from the family it may be said that most of the group life of the town takes place in the following partial list of temporary and informal groups:



## SOCIAL

The "four hundred"  
 Various middle groups  
 Various lower groups

## OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS

The white-collar group:  
 1. Office and store men of Main Street

Employers:

1. Farmers
2. Mining-company executives

The workingman group:

1. Miners and mill men
2. Skilled tradesmen
3. Farm laborers
4. Truck-drivers, teamsters, wood-choppers, etc.

## "MOONSHINE-JOINT" GROUPS

"Moonshine-joint" patrons and operators have a definite status. Some non-patrons have testified that they feel "out of place" in a "joint." As one leading citizen remarked, "I hardly have the door open when all the regular customers seem to say to me, 'What are you doing in here?'" Church ladies who solicit for charitable causes like to show that they are "good sports" by visiting these so-called "soft-drink parlors" which always make generous contributions. Each of the three "joints" tends to have a particular clientèle. But there is so much interchange in membership that only a few men can definitely be allotted by people in general to any one of the groups.

## POOL-HALL FREQUENTERS

There are many men in town who are never seen in a pool hall or "moonshine joint." Then, there are many who frequent the two pool halls but who never visit a "moon joint," and vice versa—although a large part visits both. Among those who are to be found in pool halls but not in "soft-

drink parlors" are, of course, some high-school boys and others of their ages. As in the case of the "joints," each pool hall has a certain set of more or less faithful patrons, and there is much interchange.

#### FREQUENTERS OF OTHER PLACES OF BUSINESS

Each store on Main Street has certain patrons who tend to "hang around" and visit with storekeepers, employees, and others. Establishments with the most conspicuous groups are Nick Moe's blacksmith shop, Hemmingway's garage, Boatman's clothing store, Marshall's tailor shop, Green's tailor shop and clothing store, and Haverfield's clothing store and tailor shop.

#### GROUPS BASED UPON PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT

Salmon Mill bunch	Main Street office and store bunch
Salmon Mine bunch	Railroad bunch
Moonlight Mill bunch	Teachers
Various Moonlight Mine bunches	Courthouse employees
Silver King bunch	Haying crews [harvesting crews]
Silver Bimetallic Mill bunch	

Among the deeply rooted group consciousnesses in the community are those depending upon place of employment. Men who spend most of their waking hours in close association at work can be expected to become well acquainted with one another when their work is such as permits visiting—and practically all the work in Mineville presents good opportunities for visiting. There is a rapid turnover in most of the groups and yet each has a number of members who persist, thus establishing group continuity which lasts for years as a rule.

*The Salmon Mill bunch* (number of men—18).—There is only one man working at the Salmon manganese concentra-

tor who has been in service less than two years. The majority of these men have been working together from four to ten years. Therefore, the opportunity for a new man to secure a job at "the mill" is, as men put it, "very slim." With the passing of the years the men have acquired proficiency which enables the foreman to trust their abilities in most cases of emergency. The ability of the foreman is highly respected by his men. In this group, as in the other cases in the community, men will wait around for many months through periods of depression and unemployment with a claim on their jobs, often without a serious thought of leaving town and even with a rather faint attempt to secure employment elsewhere in the community.

*The Salmon Mine bunch.*—The Salmon Mine bunch, in normal times, is composed of over one hundred men. About three-fifths of these men work day shift and two-fifths night shift. In a sense all of them may be grouped together, and yet they are distinctly divided into two shifts and the men on each shift are divided into a number of different groups which must, in turn, be subdivided according to their specifications and places of operation.

*Moonlight Mill bunch.*—Like the Salmon Mill bunch, the Moonlight Mill bunch rarely loses or acquires a member. Seven is the average number of men employed in this group.

*Various Moonlight Mine bunches.*—The Moonlight Mining Company operates a number of mining properties. At each of these is a special group consciousness. Then, among all of them, there is a group unity because all depend upon the demand for battery ore at the Burgess Battery Company of Madison, Wisconsin, and all depend upon the good will of the local owner.

*Silver King bunch.*—The Silver King group consists of

about twenty-five men—mostly leasers. These men usually work in pairs but larger groups are likely to take the long trips to and from the mine together. The whole crew tends to visit at lunch hour, and before and after work. The common leadership of Superintendent Jansen is a unifying factor.

*Silver Bimetallic Mill bunch* (twenty-two men).—The Silver Bimetallic Mill is generally called “Youlden’s Mill.” It is a new mill which has been constructed in Crystal City. Like the other mills of the community, this one holds its men over a long period of time. Superintendent Youlden is known as a stern and impetuous taskmaster, but his men respect him and in the long run work very well for him. Some of them seem indisposed to work for anyone else.

*Main Street office and store bunch*.—There is a group consciousness among those who work on or who operate businesses on Main Street. This does not mean that there is much intimacy between all members of the group, however. The unity arises out of the fact that they are grouped together by the rest of the community, out of their common dependence upon the good will of the public, and out of the superiority in the social hierarchy which their means of livelihood gives them over the ordinary miner or worker.

*The railroad bunch*.—The railroad bunch consists of the railroad employees of the Mineville branch line who live in Mineville. The group consists of an average of ten men during the colder months and fifteen during the warmer months. In a very real sense even the families of the men are also members. The depot agent is the directing authority while the engineer receives the highest amount of pay. And just as the mining element of the community has a mining mental complex, so this little railroad element is subject to a railroad

frame of mind such as is familiarly observed among railroad people.

*The teachers.*—The “teaching mentality” in Mineville is represented by thirteen active teachers and numerous former teachers. Of the active teachers, eight constitute the grade-school group and five the high-school group. The group unity is attested by the existence of the Teachers’ Club, which meets for a social evening one evening each month. At these meetings the husbands, wives, and sweethearts invited swell the total attendance to twenty-six. This group, of course, feels itself to be intellectually superior to the townsfolk in general.

*Courthouse employees.*—What may be called the courthouse employees are the county assessor and his deputy, the county treasurer and his deputy, the county clerk and recorder and his deputy, the county clerk of the court and his deputy, the three county commissioners, the district judge, the county attorney, the county superintendent of schools, the sheriff, the undersheriff, and the janitor. Aside from the janitor, these persons are the holders of the most important county offices. They are grouped together by one another and by the public.

*Haying crews.*—During the harvesting season each farm has its haying crew. These groups have some continuity from year to year because many of the farmers tend to hire some of the same men each year. Usually they live on the farm during the harvesting season. At the end of the season they return to town with their skins darkly tanned or blistered.

#### AUDIENCE AND SPECTATOR GROUPS

Basket-ball, football, and baseball game crowds

Dance spectators

Theater audiences

Political audiences

Funeral groups

Groups observing a fire

Group attending a band concert

Court spectators

Group observing a parade upon Main Street

Group attending a circus

Group attending a carnival or other tent show

Group observing races upon Main Street on Fourth of July

Group attending rodeo on Fourth of July

Audience and spectator groups are legion in Mineville—the foregoing being but a few important and suggestive instances.

*Main Street on Fourth of July.*—The largest spectator group of the year is that observing the races and the parade on Main Street on the Fourth of July. Very few persons in town and in the surrounding country remain at home on the Fourth of July morning when business houses, organizations, and individuals vie with one another for the prize for the “best float” in the parade. Following the parade come the races for children of various ages, the “free-for-all” race, the fat man’s race, etc. Amid the din of firecrackers, cap pistols, bombs, automobile horns, and shouting, the three principal blocks of Main Street are so crowded that one must edge his way along the sidewalk.

*Group attending the rodeo on Fourth of July.*—The second largest spectator group of the year is that attending the rodeo on the afternoon of the Fourth of July at the school athletic field. Ticket sales show that over one thousand people are in attendance at these rodeos. The number would be higher were not an entrance fee of a dollar charged.

*Funeral groups.*—Funeral groups vary greatly but the largest of them are exceeded in size, among spectator and



audience groups, only by the Fourth of July gala occasions. Rev. Blackwell of the Methodist church says that during the two years of his pastorship the only occasions upon which his church was filled were funerals—excepting the dedication of the new window.

*Theater audiences.*—Upon any important occasion in the theater one-third of the people in the immediate community (five hundred) people may be expected to be present. During prosperous times, in the winter, when the weather is not too cold, the theater is sometimes filled to capacity at least once each week for weeks at a time for local-talent or stock-company theatricals and motion pictures. Then there are a number of other occasions during the course of the year when there is “standing room only.”

*Group observing a fire.*—A large proportion of the population of the town is present at the call of the fire alarm—the exact number being very difficult to ascertain owing to the excitement of the crowd. Even at three o'clock in the morning, in the deep of a cold winter, most of the people in town will often be found present at a fire of large proportions. Shivering in the cold, the people stand for hours until the main excitement has passed. Girls and women in night-gowns and pajamas, and carelessly dressed leading citizens are to be seen on every hand.

*Group attending a band concert.*—During summer months Main Street is lined with automobiles each fortnight as the Mineville Municipal Band gives a concert. Others, who do not go to town, open their windows or sit on their porches in order to hear the music. As applause, automobile horns are sounded in a body, and there is some shouting.

## GROUP CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE SCHOOLS

		No. Children
GRADE SCHOOL (253 children)	Lower floor	Kindergarten . . . . . 17
		First grade . . . . . 35
		Second grade . . . . . 24
		Third grade . . . . . 33
		Fourth grade . . . . . 33
	Upper floor	Fifth grade . . . . . 26
		Sixth grade . . . . . 26
		Seventh grade . . . . . 31
		Eighth grade . . . . . 29
HIGH SCHOOL (102 enrolled)	Freshmen Sophomores Juniors Seniors	The various classes such as geometry, English, etc.; athletic teams; debate teams; and numerous cliques

## TEMPORARY PARTICIPANT GROUPS

*Annual picnics.*—Mineville usually has one or more large picnics each year which are attended by the community as a whole, in addition to the annual picnics of several of the fraternal orders and of each of the four Sunday schools. Scenic spots on lakes or creeks in the surrounding mountains are selected for these occasions. For nearly a half-century such events have been a part of the yearly round of affairs. The fish fry, which is held about twelve miles from Mineville, has attracted from twelve to fourteen hundred people. In 1930 the group promised to be so large that it was thought best to pass a year in order not seriously to affect the supply of fish in streams and lakes. At all the larger picnics a program of sports is arranged, the band plays, and some celebrity is usually invited to make a speech.

*Dancing groups.*—Several special dances of the year may be counted on to attract three hundred or more people. These are the High-School Junior Prom, High-School Alum-

ni Ball, Thanksgiving Ball, New Year's Ball, and benefit dances for which women canvass the town and sell almost everyone a ticket whether he wants it or not. An ordinary weekly dance must attract at least a hundred if it is not to be a financial failure.

*Profit-making card parties.*—From eighty to one hundred players is an ordinary crowd for a profit-making card party in Mineville. The Catholic church sponsors most of these parties in order to raise money for the church budget. The other churches look askance at such a method of fund-raising but their members are very willing to attend as players.

*Sporting and outing parties.*—Ponds and lakes of the region provide opportunities for skating parties in the winter and for swimming parties in summer. Groups also motor to Grayson Hot Springs (near Gold) in order to swim. Motor-ing, camping, and fishing parties are extremely numerous during good weather. Indeed, they seem to be one of Mineville's principal substitutes for the routine leisure-time advantages of the large city.

*Marriages, charivaris, and showers.*—Large church marriages were once common in Mineville; now they occur rarely. But charivaris are still very noisy and often include many adults besides the children. A five-dollar bill or a freezer of ice-cream usually satisfies the serenaders although sometimes they insist upon driving the newly married couple about town in an old stagecoach and attracting the attention of the whole town by sounding automobile horns. Showers or gift-giving parties for the bride-to-be are not so sensational as charivaris, but they are prominent and long remembered by the brides. And incidentally there are other sorts of showers such as those for expected babies, departing friends, etc. Men are never participants in the showers,

excepting that they may appreciate gifts received or notice the expense of gifts given.

*Children's parties.*—Mineville has the conventional children's birthday and other parties. Notices of these appear in the *Mineville Mail* and begin, "On the occasion of his fifth birthday Little Master Earl Stearns was host to the following group of his young friends: . . ."

*The "booze party."*—The "booze party" or the spontaneous drinking bout is a commonplace in Mineville, as elsewhere.

*Gambling groups.*—Every night several gambling groups are active until midnight or after. At least one such group may usually be found at any time excepting the morning hours.

*Play casts.*—Casts organized to present a local-talent theatrical have a distinct group consciousness, temporarily at least.

*Committees.*—Besides casts, there are numerous temporary formal groups which dissolve upon fulfilling their functions. Among these are the many temporary committees of fraternal orders, churches, and the like which are organized to "put on" public dinners, socials, and other functions.

While the preceding enumeration of Mineville groupings is not intended to be complete, the mere assemblage of these alone brings out rather vividly the enormous complexity of group life in a small town. In order that so many groups may exist in a community of less than fifteen hundred people everyone must, of course, be a recognized member of several or many groups, and a wholesale amount of overlapping of membership occurs. In a large city, persons may belong to numerous groups, each of which has a different

personnel. In Mineville, whether a man be working, playing golf, attending a dance, a movie, a Fourth of July celebration, a church social, an ultra-modern moonshine party, or a meeting of the Masons, the Rotary Club, the American Legion, the school board, or what not, he is associating with people he knows and with at least part of whom he has usually been associated in some or many other activities throughout the years.

NOTE.—For family groups see chap. xi; church organizations, pp. 348 ff., boys' and girls' gangs, chaps. xii and xiii; and nationality groups, pp. 33 f. and 157 f.





PART IV

SOCIAL CHANGE



## CHAPTER XV

### SMALL-TOWN POLITICS

When a candidate for United States senator makes a campaign speech in Mineville he pleads his great interest in the basic industries of the county: mining, farming, and stock-raising. He speaks fervently of what he has done or will do to retain the protective tariff on manganese, and he enthuses about the prospects for a protective tariff on silver. He weeps over the injustice which has been inflicted upon farmers and stock-raisers and tells of his noble wishes or attempts to remedy the situation. He jeopardizes many votes by the position he takes regarding the domination of the state by the Standard Copper Company, and he gains a few by interspersing jokes and slurs at the expense of prohibition—which are so popular in “wet” Mineville. In all, he must be most artful because he wishes votes from the two great conflicting interests of the state and of the county: mining and farming.

In the local drama of “the farmers against the miners” Mineville is generally defeated by the “lower valley,” the main farming part of the county. With approximately 60 per cent of the fifteen hundred votes of the county in Mineville, the “lower valley” is able to win because it is disposed to give its support solidly to one of the candidates for a given office. In one farming precinct, votes of 46 to 0 are a commonplace against any Democrat, regardless of his merits—especially if he hails from Mineville.

The county is said to be normally Republican because it is prone to give majorities to state and national candidates

of that party. A factor in Republican dominance is its leadership, the only man in the county recognized to be a political "boss" being within its ranks. Still, Democrats are elected freely to county office, since, in the long run, attitudes arising from intimate association with the candidate triumph over party lines—most of the voters flattering themselves that in the case of county candidates they "vote for the best man." Even the Republican "boss" was able to say:

I follow my party pretty closely for state and national candidates but for county candidates I don't think that is necessary. We know one another too well. Party really shouldn't make much difference for county offices.

#### INTIMACY IN POLITICS

When a rumor had been in circulation that a certain popular Mineviller was about to enter his candidacy for office, he rebelled.

I'll kill that in a hurry and you do the same. I'm not a candidate under any conditions. People tell me that I would win but I'm afraid I wouldn't. The best way to find out what the people of this town think of you is to run for office. I'm happier not knowing what they think of me. I'd probably feel like leaving town if I knew how few people in this town really think I'm worth anything. I don't want my friends to have a mathematical measurement of my popularity; it might make me feel cheap. No sir! No politics for me, much as I would like some of those offices.

I'm not going to give a lot of people the personal satisfaction of casting a vote against me. Why, everybody that has taken a dislike for me since I was in knee breeches is assembled right here in this little town and they probably make up a large part of the voters. I could tell you of fellows who never did like me from the time when we played marbles at the grade school. There is hardly a thing that I've done in twenty years that someone in this town does not know about and won't use for or against me. Every smile, handshake, frown, and dis-

pute that I've had since I was a kid will count. Maybe I'm too sensitive, but that's the way I feel. A fellow has to be calloused even for small-town politics.

This sensitive individual recognizes one of the profound truths of Mineville politics: That the candidate's success or failure is a result, in large measure, of the friendships and antagonisms he has accumulated during his years in the community. Indeed, the total population is so small that the personal contact which the candidate has with most of the voters can easily overcome the power of the strongest wielders of political power in the county.

For the most part, a candidate must not find fault with his opponent. Should he do so he places himself in danger of being branded a "knocker" and being accused of "playing dirty politics." In a "clean" campaign he does his best to ingratiate himself but says nothing that even by inference can be construed as having been intended to do political harm to his opponent. When not offering a compliment, he would best avoid mention of his opponent to the people at large unless his own political prestige is far the stronger, unless he is witty and hence able to use ridicule to good advantage, or unless he wishes to secure sympathy by defending himself against an unjust attack. The most legitimate criticism he can offer tends to be construed to have its roots in uncharitable personal motives. Even though voters agree with his points of criticism they consider it poor taste for him to "say anything about the other fellow." Above all, he is supposed to be a "good sport." In order to show the "good sport" that he is he may say many nice things about his opponent, whether he believes them or not. Whenever he takes the risk to say anything against his adversary, he is likely to apologize with the prefix, "I really shouldn't be

saying anything but. . . ." In fact, he is obliged to depend upon his friends and supporters to do the "dirty work." As an old Mineville politician said:

Don't say anything against your opponent. If there is something you want circulated against him, just tell your friends and let them do the talking. You can't always tell who your friends are but your choice will be right most of the time. And it's never too early to start your campaign. A fellow can start several years ahead and gradually undermine his opponent's political prestige by dropping innocent remarks here and there where they will do the most good. Then when the campaign actually opens you can be clean and above board while other people give your opponent hell with the information you have supplied. And the funny thing about it is that they act as if the ideas are their own; they forget where they got them.

A candidate's boosters rarely approximate a unit, however. Rather, the typical county political battle is a struggle between unorganized "workers" and factions, for and against the candidates. These "workers" set about to "talk" for or against a candidate. They tend to broadcast his virtues and belittle or ignore his shortcomings while exaggerating the faults and minimizing the virtues of his opponent. When politics is at fever heat, they form a network through which everything to which political significance may be attributed is circulated. They are the most valuable asset of a candidate. Issues are largely a farce because there are scores of purported issues upon which any candidate may be elected or defeated, given the existence or lack of supporters to talk things "up" or "down."

In the long run, any reason for which any voter likes, dislikes, approves, or disapproves of a candidate or his relatives or friends may become a political issue. As an experienced candidate said, "If your half-uncle was drunk in 1870 and stole a mouldy ham, someone will dig up the fact and



use it against you—with the insinuation that you might do the same sort of thing.” It is this situation which led another veteran politician of the county to say: “The political offices of this county are non-political—that is, they are personal rather than political affairs.” This is shown in the following, which are frequently important deciding factors:

1. *The sympathetic vote.*—Candidates are regularly elected because of large sympathetic votes, so called. The people do not hesitate to admit that they voted for So-and-So “because he needs the job,” owing to old age, being crippled, having a large family, etc. A young candidate’s judgment of the effect of this issue upon his defeat follows:

I think the two things that beat me were my age and the fact that I’m single. If I had a wife and a batch of kids, I think I might have beat Trent. I know of a woman in this town who was one of my staunchest supporters, but who turned against me when they went to her with the appeal that Trent had two children and was about to have another in the family. And the worst of it was that she took twenty-one votes with her.

Yes, that sympathetic vote did a lot to win for Trent. It’s the women especially who vote on sympathy. Ma, herself, said that if some other young fellow had been running against Trent and they came to her with that appeal, she guessed she would have voted for Trent. I guess a fellow can’t blame them.

The mayor recognized the same phenomenon when he said of a venerable official’s re-election: “Turner was elected because he needed it. Everybody knows that he is useless and no good for the job but everybody knows that he needs it.”

Besides need for a livelihood, other appeals may arouse a strong sympathetic vote. Sometimes these are very irrational, as the intelligent residents well know. For instance, the mayor said:

Politics is queer business. It's as McDale [lawyer] said: If Allan Gonn's [defeated candidate for sheriff] wife had died a week before election, he couldn't have been beaten by anybody. People follow their feelings. Oh, I guess I haven't any right to complain because I vote that way myself at times.

I'll tell you a good example of the way people vote around here. When John Lambeth was running for commissioner, last time, he was sick in the hospital most of the time. Well, he was elected, and, I'd bet you that if he were to run now he would be defeated five or six to one. People voted for him because they felt sorry for him.

No doubt all county candidates receive some "sympathetic votes." The extent varies greatly, and becomes the deciding factor for but a few candidates in each campaign. And even in these extreme cases it is harmful to public welfare only when it places the extremely incompetent in office (i.e., Mrs. Richie's election nine times for the office of county superintendent of schools, several terms past the point at which senescence had rendered her incompetent).

2. *Likeableness*.—As in the larger public, the emotional voting of the county stresses likeableness. Manual laborers, utterly unqualified for office work, may suddenly find themselves in charge of offices in the courthouse mainly because of the vote-getting power of their genial good natures. One of the leaders of the town unblushingly said: "Of course, I don't vote for people if I don't like them. I don't see why I should. And I'm not ashamed of it either. If I should be ashamed of it then everyone in town is in the same boat." The people are even known to vote against a man in large numbers, merely because of disliking his wife. For best results the candidate's entire family should have "charming" personalities.

3. *Sex morality*.—The personal habits of the candidate, and especially those of his wife, are very important. Highly

qualified men have been defeated because of the reputed unfaithfulness of their wives, although, perhaps as a rule, the men were unaware of the factor underlying their defeats. Regarding such a man a prominent citizen said:

Anybody with a grain of common sense should have known that Hawkins wouldn't get a woman's vote in this town. A fellow may patronize a prostitute and all that but when it comes to having one wait upon him and his wife in a public office, he is going to draw the line. You know that as well as I do.

4. *Honesty*.—Traits of dishonesty tend to react against a candidate because in the intimacy of the community they are discovered sooner or later. The most frequent of these relates to the meeting of financial obligations. Literally, everyone knows whether or not the other fellow "pays his bills" and votes accordingly—other things being equal.

5. *The personal greeting*.—The candidate must greet everyone. If he fails to greet anyone on Main Street or elsewhere, the injured party will say, for instance, "He's too stuck up. He won't get my vote."

The other side of this matter is that in attempting to comply with public expectancy the candidate naturally becomes more sociable and attempts to extend his range of speaking acquaintances. In so doing he antagonizes many people who say, "The son-of-a-gun is after my vote. I wasn't good enough for him to speak to until he wanted my vote."

Thus the candidate is between two fires, but in the long run he gains more votes by wholesale greeting or association than he loses. The average candidate feels that the complainers are mainly those who were against him in the first place.

6. *Too young*.—"Too young" is a cry that plays an im-

portant rôle against a young candidate who is making his first bid for office. The power behind this issue comes from the intimacy with which the people know a young man who has grown up in the community. Just as grown sons of a mother are still her "boys," so the grown sons of Mineville have great difficulty in achieving manhood's estate in the eyes of the people who have known them all of their lives.

7. *Home boy.*—To be a home boy has its disadvantages in respect to vote-getting, but it may also be a distinct advantage if a large and influential group of boosters is continually preaching, "Let's show a little loyalty to one of our own boys." Against natives of ordinary popularity newcomers have a very poor chance of victory. They rarely attempt to secure political office. A few years ago a druggist of but several years' residence made a very extensive campaign and almost secured the Republican nomination for an office. Had there not been four other candidates for the same office he probably would not have fared so well. The mere handful of votes were split into so many parts that even a weak candidate with a solid following had a chance.

8. *A "smart Alec."*—The candidate must not appear to have an exaggerated opinion of himself. If he has had superior educational advantages he should act as if he is scarcely aware of the fact. Many of the people appreciate "an educated man" but perhaps equally as many will vote against him out of envy. Therefore, he must be very tactful about displaying distinct superiority in argument.

9. *Not known personally.*—The people demand a personal acquaintanceship with the candidate in most cases. They say, "I don't know him. Why should I vote for him?" Good reports about him avail little in proportion to personal ties with the voters. Sometimes they feel that anyone would be

better than the candidate they know intimately, but this is far more seldom the case than its converse.

In the preceding list some of the outstanding manifestations of the personal factor in the politics of the community have been given. Numerous impersonal issues are also current, and they are not without strong effect in some cases but they are always inextricably bound up with the personal. More often than not the final decision of a Mineville voter, who pretends to be acting upon a purely impersonal plane, is merely the rationalization of an attitude which is basically personal. This is recognized in the customary outward technique of conducting a campaign in the county. The candidate's frank appeal is personal. He is expected to visit with and endeavor to establish pleasant personal bonds between himself and every voter, and he is explicitly advised by those experienced in the political tactics of the county not to talk of politics when it can be avoided. So much is the political "call" expected in some of the farming parts of the county that when it is not made the people are known to say, "He didn't care enough about my vote to come around and get acquainted, and so I guess I'll vote for the fellow who did."

Some notion of the relative importance of personal and impersonal factors in influencing votes may be gleaned from the following list of issues in five county political battles of the elections of 1928 and 1930 (those with asterisk representing main issues):

*Unfaithful wife	"Wife gets drunk and stages wild parties for her children and their friends"
*Dishonest and does not pay bills	
'Already has a good job'	"A radical"
'Doesn't trade at our store'	"A fool"
'Never spoke to me till he wanted my vote'	"Not public spirited"



"I don't like him but I can't stand the other fellow"	"A smart Alec"
"Never got his hands dirty at hard work in his life"	A "wet"
Incompetent: "never has had a case in court"	A prohibitionist
*"He needs it. What in the world will poor Mrs. Turner do if we don't re-elect her husband?"	A Republican
"Give a young fellow a chance"	A Democrat
"He has had it long enough"	*"He's so likeable"
*"Best assessor in the state"	"He's rotten morally"
"Made unreasonable promises"	Incompetent: "too old"
*Made a fortune in local mines and "spent it in Mineville"	A drunkard
"Always paid his men higher than the current wage scale"	"Too sissified to drink"
"Too old; will die before his term is over"	A farmer
"Kedzie won last time; it's Gage's turn to go again"	A miner
"Never takes a definite stand on anything"	"Ed is a nice boy"
Once had a venereal disease while a young man	A home boy
	A Catholic
	A Mason
	Irish
	Swedish
	*"Thinks too well of himself"
	*"A workingman's friend"
	*"Corporation owned"
	"Talks a great deal and says nothing"

These are reasons actually given for choice among candidates. But the people know one another well enough that an occasion like the following is typical:

A: McNall says he isn't going to vote for Sims because Sims is against the workingman.

B: Don't you let him tell you that. He has no interest in the workingman. The truth is that he has had no use for Sims because he heard that Sims passed some uncomplimentary remarks about his wife.

The people habitually look for other reasons than those given by townsfolk as deciding factors. Kinship, friendship,



fraternal, business, and religious ties are especially good indices of probable bias. There is a community habit of assuming that the two largest families vote solidly for certain candidates. These families have over fifty and seventy-five votes, respectively—figures which must be doubled to represent voting strength since it is reasonable to assume that each member can marshal one outside vote. It is not strange that these families should have a lion's share of the political offices and jobs of the community since either one voting as a unit can throw a margin of victory to an ordinary candidate.

Should a candidate be so fortunate as to be victorious, he finds himself under constant pressure from the exaggerated importance of the personal relations in his electorate. In matters of official policy he must ever think in terms of personalities. Even a minor deputy at the courthouse was able to say, "Every taxpayer treats you as if you were working for him personally, as if he pays your whole salary." And yet, with all of his complaint at the peculiarities of his public, the officeholder usually "gets the habit" and continues to be a candidate as long as the law will permit or as long as he has hope that the people will support him at the polls. He learns to enjoy the prestige of his job as well as the regular pay check. Regardless of how many times the people may have re-elected him, he takes his eventual defeat bitterly. There are cases in which relatives of defeated candidates testify that defeat in a county election was the major cause of the candidate's suicide or of a general breakdown which resulted in his death. For in nearly every case the Mineville political candidate thinks of his defeat in personal terms, in terms of the number and sincerity of his friends.

The student who would investigate the personal basis of

"Main Street's" social organization could select no more convincing point of attack than her politics. During a political campaign he will find the community consciousness focused for a long period of time upon the same local issues and these are largely personal. He will find the people willing or eager to discuss these issues, and thus has a rare opportunity to observe the ebb and flow of opinion in regard to them. Despite the intense pressure of social controls operating to curb free expression of opinion, the people reserve the right to flail their local political candidates and leaders with a great deal of abandon. Whatever they may say, however, most of them make a strong effort to conceal the way in which they vote because such information may arouse personal antagonisms which will work dire consequences in the years to come. A device of protection is that of treating each candidate as if they voted for him.

#### A POLITICAL BATTLE

Shortly after the middle of the month of May, 1930, the three candidates who sought to be Crystal County's lone representative in the state legislature had filed their candidacies. On the Republican ticket O'Neil, one of Mineville's leading citizens, a member of her social élite, and rated as one of the most popular men in the town, was opposed by Hamilton, the incumbent, who was a very popular farmer in his part of the county—the "lower valley." Bartlett, the Democratic candidate, was a native son of Mineville, who had not long since been doing postgraduate study at a mid-western university. Being unopposed on his own party, he awaited election day (July 15) for the elimination of one of the Republicans so that he might know definitely who would be his opponent in the November election.

The excitement of the whole pre-primary period was centered about the struggle between O'Neil and Hamilton. O'Neil conducted a whirlwind campaign. Never before was so much advertising done by a candidate for a Crystal County office. About every twenty-five feet on each side of the three principal blocks of Main Street one saw a large sign which read "H. A. O'Neil for State Representative." The number of these advertisements exceeded that of all other state and county candidates combined. People said:

It looks as if O'Neil is the only one running for office. There is no sense in so much advertising because we know who he is. It gets tiresome to see his signs on every telephone pole, stump, or fence post in the county. You would think he was running for governor instead of for state representative. Advertising is all right but it can easily be overdone in a place like this where everybody knows you anyway.

O'Neil indeed seemed to be following a technique which is more applicable in larger publics. He visited with so many people and talked so much that he lost his voice during the week prior to election. And, true to the way of politics, some people accused him of pretending that he had a vocal affliction in order to secure a sympathetic vote.

In the face of these conspicuous and breath-taking tactics, Hamilton waged an almost invisible campaign. Not a single placard bearing his name was to be seen. Quietly and informally he organized his own part of the county solidly in his favor and depended upon whispering supporters to press his cause elsewhere. With a skill which few suspected that he had, he stimulated the antagonism which the "lower valley" bears against Mineville and at the same time kept himself in the good graces of Mineville. His fundamental appeal was for a sympathetic vote. Partly in his own words it can be stated thus: "Poor me! The head of my own party

is against me! The great corporations are against me! Please help a sincere and downtrodden candidate who always gives everyone a square deal."

From the start the cry of "corporation owned" rang out loudly against O'Neil because he was in the employ of the Gibraltar Power Company. Apparently not realizing the strength of this feeling, he committed a tactical blunder by sponsoring the withdrawal of a petition which was to initiate a popular vote on a workmen's compensation act. Quite frankly he escorted about the county an informal representative of "the power company" who was going through gestures of convincing people that they had made a mistake by signing the petition and hence should remove their names. Almost every signer who was approached withdrew his signature. He knew well that he was confronted not by ordinary citizens but by a state-wide financial power. "It doesn't pay for us to oppose 'the company' openly," said a voter. "We'll show our power at the polls where they can't check up on us." And so they did! A wave of resentment spread over the county and it was focused on O'Neil, "the company's" candidate. Thus the tide of victory was turned to Hamilton, to the surprise of most of the prominent people of Mineville and to the humiliation of O'Neil, whose conception of his rôle in the community was severely jarred. Of this the people said: "He is no longer the same man with all of that confidence gone. He thought this town would refuse him nothing."

It is generally conceded that had not O'Neil traveled around "with that Gibraltar Power fellow" he would have won. But despite this mistake, victory might have been his had there not been so many people in Mineville who felt as did the woman who complained:

O'Neil is big-hearted and all that, but he's all for O'Neil. I don't like him. He can't take a joke. He and his wife "high hat" the town; they put on too many airs; they don't associate with anybody but that "four hundred" bunch. They think they're too good for the rest of us.

O'Neil's boosters tried valiantly to make his undisputed superiority in ability a major issue but with little effect. A reply to this argument was: "What good is it to send a superior man if he is going to use his superiority for the benefit of the big corporations? I'd rather send a dumb-bell."

Meanwhile, the supporters of Bartlett, the unopposed Democratic candidate, were quietly active. Some of them voted against O'Neil merely because they felt that Hamilton would "be an easier man to beat in the general election." The number of these votes may have been sufficient to have defeated O'Neil.

But Bartlett realized that he was a weak candidate as well as a member of the weaker party. With two such popular men as Hamilton and O'Neil in the field he knew that he had no small task in getting the public to take his candidacy seriously. He was convinced that he was an underdog who had to fight his own battle without a large body of supporters. To do this he saw but one promising approach: to elevate the politics of the county from its personal and whispering basis to the level of open discussion between candidates in the *Mineville Mail*. Such a plan seemed workable and feasible on the assumptions that O'Neil would be victorious; that little prodding would be required to cause him to respond to a challenge; that the public would demand a response from him should he demur; and that a candidate as weak as Bartlett should seize upon the primary as an opportunity to advertise himself, even though he be un-



opposed. But, alas! This diagnosis was almost in direct opposition to the turn of events.

Soon after the *Mineville Mail* had broadcast Bartlett's first article of challenge to his opponents he heard reliable rumors that he need not expect the Republicans "to be foolish enough" to engage him in open combat, either by pen or by debate. But he did not despair. With added vigor in his later articles he analyzed the value of an open interchange of opinions by candidates in the *Mail*. He tried to emphasize the wide contrast between the present ignorance of candidates' views and abilities and that which voters would have were opposing candidates to air their views in a paper which reaches three-fourths of the people of the county once each week. If elected, he proposed to write weekly reports for the *Mail* which would keep voters informed as to the proceedings of the legislature and as to his stand on important bills—a proposition which might have interested any intelligent voter, in view of the prevailing almost complete ignorance of most of the voters upon such matters. Nothing he could say was greeted with favor by a wide audience, however. In disapproval the average voter said: "That fool should be quiet until after the primary. The people will not be interested in him until they know who his opponent is going to be, and maybe not then."

When the young candidate presented thoroughly impersonal and formal arguments for a newspaper discussion of local issues by candidates, he was accused of "trying to show off his education." When he tried to express himself in terms that would sting his opponents into response, the reaction was: "He's sore; that's all that's the matter with him." There seemed to be no way of shaming the public into demanding that the Republicans come out of ambush.



Offering no argument, men would say: "I wouldn't vote for the son-of-a-gun under any conditions since he wrote them damned articles." And the more intelligent opponents, unable to find just grounds for criticism, made a concerted use of that powerful weapon, ridicule. Without giving the candidate an opportunity to show his wares, he was disposed of lightly as being "too young." By word and by inarticulate gesture, efforts were made to indicate that anyone with common sense would know that he was not a person of sufficient consequence to be elected to such an office. "Bartlett will be all right if O'Neil loses," Mineville opponents of Hamilton said—but they had no intimation that O'Neil would lose. In a mock sneer they would say: "I wonder what that young fool thinks he is going to accomplish by those articles. They will do him more harm than good." And, bitterly, some of Bartlett's staunchest supporters spoke the same words, for he had demonstrated in the eyes of many people that he lacked common sense. By proposing an impracticable plan he had shown that there was something wrong with his "brains"! He was supposed to play the political game as he found it and not to question its rules.

For five weeks before the primary election Bartlett's articles appeared in the *Mail* but they aroused no reply. Each week he felt a bit more as if he were talking to a stone wall. How widely his words were read he did not know, nor did he realize the extent to which he had antagonized people until the primary election votes were counted. Two-fifths of the Democratic voters preferred to vote for no one rather than to vote for him. This unpopularity, of course, could have been due to other causes, but none was apparent which was strong enough to promise such a drastic result. For in local politics even a fairly unpopular candi-

date is usually given a vote due to courtesy if he is unopposed—unless he is almost unknown, his wife's or his own morals are in extreme disrepute, or his qualifications are wretchedly inadequate.

With the weight of public opinion either against him or not at all impressed by his proposition of an open discussion of issues, Bartlett discontinued what had been an expensive procedure to him, financially and politically. The people, it seemed, did not care to be reminded of such obvious things as the personal basis of their politics, by a young man fresh from college; and they did not see any great need for a change in the situation. Consequently, the Republican politicians could well feel that they were in the ascendancy, and could ignore the Democratic upstart who proposed to revolutionize the political tactics of the county and to rob manipulators of votes of some of their power. A measure of the sentiment of the public is well taken in the following statement by a local voter:

The people don't care about much that county candidates have to say on actual political matters. They want to form their own opinions and they resent the idea that they need any help from anyone they know so well. If a county candidate has anything to say he'd better say nearly all of it in little personal chats with the people. They only want formal arguments from state and national candidates. County candidates are too close to home for such things; the best thing for them to do is to say nothing and be nice to everybody. They will gain a few votes by what they might say but they will lose more than they will gain.

Such evidence would seem to discount the emphasis which some theorists place upon the notion that the democratic ideal can be realized better in the small than in the large community. For, whereas in the large public the people are dependent upon complicated machines of propaganda for

their information on political issues, in Mineville, when it was suggested that they demand first-hand information from their candidates, they were not only disinterested but many of them were openly antagonistic. The notion that they know "everything" about one another blinds even most of those who are interested in platforms and ability to the fact that some native son might have hidden ideas and abilities which they had not suspected.

For Bartlett, the most unfortunate result of the articles was that they ushered him before the public prematurely and caused the O'Neilites actively to belittle him in an effort to magnify the virtues of their candidate. From a candidate not taken seriously he made himself an object for definite adverse propaganda by the group which was to turn in his favor after O'Neil's defeat. The final result of the general election indicated that the loyal "boosting" given him by this group following the primaries was not enough to overcome the "knocking" they had done previously. They had already killed him, and had paved the way for victory for Hamilton, the man they had wished to defeat.

Three and one-half months elapsed between the primary and general elections. Throughout the whole period Hamilton made frequent visits to other parts of the county than his own, pretending at all times that his intent was non-political. Sociable with everyone and very inoffensive, his unfailing supply of light talk made strong supporters for him. He was merely making extra effort to put himself before the people, a result which he accomplished in election season and out by making himself conspicuous wherever people were assembled or passed in large numbers and by being a general "good sport" and "the life of the party."

In the meantime Bartlett, perhaps unwisely, did much

thinking and very little acting in accordance with the advice of the Republican "boss," who said: "I think it is a good idea to start late sometimes, then if you happen to say anything that might lose votes for you, it can't get circulated over the county in time to hurt you." In order to "find out which way the wind was blowing" Bartlett, of course, naturally visited with people—the net result of which was that he was made too hopeful since those who thought his chances to be poor tended to say nothing while those who were of the opinion that he would win were effusive.

When Bartlett at last entered upon his campaign in earnest, his first step was to secure the names and addresses of all Mineville voters who were living outside of the county. To these he sent applications for absent voters' ballots along with short notes designed to win support for himself. Over one hundred such applications were mailed, and he was able to know that most of the persons to whom they were sent responded with a vote for him, since absent ballots are counted separately. Such voters, being outside the community, were not influenced by community gossip.

The ambitious young candidate's next step was that of mailing to all voters blotters advertising his candidacy. What was accomplished by this device is not known. No doubt it won a few votes even though about fifty of the absorbent papers were cast into the waste-paper basket in the Mineville post-office alone, when voters received them in their mail.

Next on the program were the two grand occasions when candidates for the United States Senate and House of Representatives came to town to make speeches. There were no "movies" on those evenings. First the theater was rented by the Republicans and then by the Democrats. As the Repub-

lican notables discoursed on hard times and the tariff and the abuse that the Democrats were flinging at them, Hamilton and the other county candidates of his party sat on the stage in display, in mute advertisement of their own candidacies. And the following week the Democratic opponents also sat in state in their best bib and tucker as the great men of their party spoke. An outsider was much amused at the sight of United States Senator Walsh speaking while a semi-circle of self-conscious county candidates formed his background. But amusing as this traditional practice may seem, it is well worth the time of the local office-seeker because it puts him before the public—before two-fifths of the voters of the county for a period of two and one-half hours.

Following these speeches the customary thing is the staging of dances at which the candidates do their best to meet people and to dance with as many women as possible. In fact, attendance at dances in general is so much a custom that when Bartlett did not attend them until two weeks before election people said he was "making a poor campaign," that he would "have to be getting out and showing himself."

The most important stroke of the campaign is a house-to-house canvass of the farming parts of the county. A number of candidates usually go together on these trips. For five successive days Bartlett and three other Democratic candidates went from farm to farm; and Hamilton, with a fellow-Republican, followed. Finally, election day came. Table XV shows the verdict for the quartet of Democrats who campaigned together.

Each of these battles has its own long and complicated history. We are only attempting a digest of one, of which

Table XVI represents the important factors involved, in so far as it was possible to secure statements from voters.

TABLE XV

State senator . . . . .	{ Gage Kedzie	D. 677 R. 510	Plurality 167
State representative . . . . .	{ Bartlett Hamilton	D. 550 R. 617	Plurality 67
County commissioner . . . . .	{ Gourtney Mohanson	D. 564 R. 622	Plurality 58
County attorney . . . . .	{ Burfee Ervine	D. 640 R. 553	Plurality 87

TABLE XVI

Calvin Bartlett	Mel Hamilton
"Too young."	"Will be of more influence because he is older."
"Inexperienced."	"One term deserves another."
"That kid's a smart Alec. Mel's a nice fellow and easy to get along with. He's a prince of a fellow to go fishing with. He sure gets my vote and all our family."	"Give Hamilton another chance. No one can do much his first term. It takes the first term for a man to learn the machinery of the legislature."
"If he had belonged to the Redmen and the K.P., he would have won. People know who he is but they don't know him well enough to realize his ability."	"He played his Masonic connections pretty strong."
"We should send a college man for a change."	"Since when did that Bartlett kid become so smart?"
"Let's send someone who knows enough to say something."	"That Hamilton doesn't know anything and doesn't do anything in the legislature. He can't give the simplest sort of talk."



Calvin Bartlett

"Calvin is a fine boy; the people should give him a chance."

"That Calvin Bartlett is too stuck up. I won't vote for him."

"Let's send one of our own boys instead of that damned Canadian."

"I've known him since he was a baby. In fact, I knew his folks before he was born."

"He lost a lot of votes when he said the moonshine joints on Main Street should be closed" [false report].

"Them articles in the paper lost for him. I have heard one person after another say so."

"If the people of Mineville want the mining industry supported they should vote for Bartlett."

"Calvin makes a good appearance when he's dressed up."

"He gained nearly all of his strength during the last ten days. If the election had been a week later he would have won because he was gaining strength all the time."

"The people of Mineville should rebel against the domination of a handful of people in the lower valley."

Mel Hamilton

"Mel is a fine fellow. Nearly everyone likes him."

"Hamilton is a tightwad."

"I went to school with his wife."

"Mel really doesn't amount to much. He has never made a success of anything. He gets his strength politically because he comes from so fine a family. People think they are voting for the other Hamiltons and you sure can't beat them for being nice people."

"That fool Hamilton failed to meet with a committee from Mineville which went to Melena to see him, and then the next day he voted against the mining interests without knowing it. He's a numbskull."

"That Hamilton is a 'hick.' Why doesn't he wear a hat? I wonder what makes his face so red."

"They say that Jeff Houser [Repub. boss] says, 'Hamilton will not go to the legislature.' We'll show him."

"The lower valley deserves one member in the legislature. We have the senator."

TABLE XVI—*Continued*

Calvin Bartlett

Mel Hamilton

"I never did like those Bartletts."

"A lot of people are jealous because Calvin has education."

"Calvin made a fine run for a young fellow. He'll get it next time. In his first race he really couldn't expect to overcome the strong support they give to home boys and Republicans in the lower valley. Mineville gave Calvin a good majority. He'll get more votes in the valley when they get better acquainted with him."

"Mr. Bartlett has done so much for this town that the people should support his son."

In the Mormon settlement of Mormonville, where Hamilton received all of the thirty-five votes, the people explained: "Mel is a good neighbor and he is on our ticket, and so we don't see why we should vote for that Bartlett whom we don't know very well."

"Ruth is so nice. I must vote for her husband."

On the day following the election Bartlett found himself attempting to secure information as to some of the deeper causes for his defeat. By way of gossip he discovered that persons he had counted among his friends had voted against him. In some cases they showed themselves to be not so much his friends as he had supposed, but in others they seemed to be merely, as an old politician put it, "better friends of the other fellow." After all, when a Mineville voter has two of his friends opposing one another in politics, as he often does, he cannot vote for both of them—and then there are other factors besides friendship. On the whole, however, Bartlett was left in a sea of doubt as to who voted for him. He had many opinions but relatively few of them could be verified. He learned the truth of the old saying among local politicians, "Everybody acts as if he voted for

you. You'll never know for sure who did and so give everybody the benefit of the doubt because if they didn't vote for you this time they might next time." Just as perhaps every Crystal County candidate throughout the years has done, he thought, "Wouldn't it be interesting to know who voted against me and why they did it?"

With the election past, Bartlett was of the belief that victory could have been his had he made a house-to-house canvass of the residence parts of Junction and Mineville, and had he made an effort to encourage some of his friends to register. Others are certain that had he made trips throughout the county during the summer he would have won, because there were many people in the lower valley who had never seen him but who knew his opponent well. His supporters now (shortly after election) say: "If Calvin joins a couple of lodges and mixes with the people of the lower valley for the next two years, no one can beat him. The people want to feel that they know him well." But, on the other hand, Hamilton no doubt has many ideas as to how he might have increased his vote and as to how he actually intends to do so, in 1932.

#### CITY ELECTIONS

Nominees for a city election are selected at a caucus of forty to sixty persons. Sometimes there is a deluge of nominations but as a rule a mere handful of influential persons known to support a candidate already nominated is likely to prevent the nomination of others. Normally the people lack courage to risk antagonizing prominent persons or factions by making a display of opposition.

Elections occur about two weeks after the caucus. Meanwhile, little or no direct campaigning is done and no cards

or posters are to be seen. But various interested factions are at work informally. Any strong faction may, if it votes as a unit, virtually be assured of victory, so light is the vote cast. In the last presidential election year (1928) 781 votes out of a registration of 882 were cast in Mineville in the general election. With approximately this same number of possible votes throughout the years, Table XVII shows the small numbers of votes cast in city elections over a twenty-five-year period.

TABLE XVII

1904.....	105	1917.....	68
1905.....	137	1918.....	83
1906.....	79	1919.....	59
1907.....	70	1920.....	55
1908.....	196	1921.....	38
1909.....	87	1922.....	78
1910.....	186	1923.....	58
1911.....	77	1924.....	70
1912.....	154	1925.....	43
1913.....	142	1926.....	85
1914.....	214	1927.....	86
1915.....	174	1928.....	165
1916.....	121		

City Treasurer McGuire's comment on the lack of interest in city elections perhaps takes the measure of the average potential voter's attitude upon the matter.

The people take no interest in city elections and I don't know that it makes much difference.

No, I don't know what could have brought out the big vote we had from 1912 to 1916. I didn't take much interest in those days. I was busy in the store, and besides one man is about as good as another for such jobs.

The mayor, however, seems to have analyzed the lack of interest more thoroughly.

The best explanation of the lack of interest in city elections that I can think of is that the jobs aren't high-salaried jobs. There is interest in county elections because they put men in some pretty good jobs. There is nothing but grief to city jobs; nobody thinks they amount to anything. The city affairs have been handled so poorly for so long that the people seem to have lost interest and learned to expect nothing good to come out of them.

The only elective city offices are those of the mayor, six aldermen, and the city treasurer. Candidates for these offices usually run unopposed, there often being difficulty in securing someone to run for alderman. The small stipends received by the councilmen for each monthly or special meeting makes the financial inducement almost negligible for them. The city treasurership, which is a regular job with a compensation of one hundred dollars a month, is a little more attractive.

When there occurs a sudden burst of interest in a city election it is occasioned mainly by personal issues or by a proposed bond issue. Such a burst came in 1930 when City Treasurer McGuire lost his office. No one had contemplated that he would be opposed until Alfred Smith, a member of one of the large family groups, was suddenly in need of a job less than a month prior to the election. McGuire was efficient at his work but this fact carried little weight against family influence and a large sympathetic vote. Smith was a cripple. There was not another position in the community which he could pretend to hold, and even when elected his faithful wife was obliged to carry the burden of his duties. Also he had a small daughter and no other available source of income while McGuire was believed to be able to "keep the wolf from the door" by small earnings from a rooming-house. McGuire, an old-timer, sixty-four years of age, took

his defeat with complaisance. He had long ago learned to expect such a fate at the hands of the Mineville public. The loss, however, was personal and not public, for Mrs. Smith was capable and conscientious. In fifteen years the only issue to bring out a larger vote than the desire to give Smith a job was the \$35,000 water-line bond issue of 1928.

#### THE OFFICEHOLDER

The typical holder of a county office in Mineville serves two terms or more. Regardless of his failure during a first term, he tends to be elected for a second on a basis of a community belief that "one term deserves another." This means that he undergoes a great deal of trouble at public expense to learn the duties of his office during the first term and consequently should be re-elected. But, despite hard-earned efficiency, after the second term his retirement is urged under the argument that he "has had it long enough."

The trials and tribulations of all the officeholders are many. Those bearing the brunt of public abuse are the county commissioners and City Council members. These men receive little credit for their efforts and make many enemies. Of nineteen men elected to the Board of County Commissioners in the last thirty-eight years only two represent re-elections. The same situation might obtain for the City Council were there keen competition for seats within its ranks.

In a large community, officials can "pass the buck," and it is often difficult to locate responsibility, but in Mineville even the highest official is directly accountable to every citizen. With the fluidity of gossip, both radical and conservative persons tend to hear of his official acts in some detail and each reserves the right to question him personally at any



time regarding them. This is annoying but at least it keeps some officeholders alert to the various sides of their problems. At first blush it might seem as if officials could not be progressive under such a situation. But the eventual action of the local City Council and Board of County Commissioners is usually no average of the various extremes but rather to a large extent an independent attempt (however poor) to act in accordance with the best interests of all. For they must somehow attempt to predict changes of mind which occur over a long period of time since the people hold officials accountable for mistakes they themselves would have made. In other words, these officials are often obliged to ignore the present state of public opinion in deference to what they expect opinion to be in the long run. And in the long run accomplishments in Mineville are expected to compare favorably with those generally accepted in the country at large.

The problem of running the city government is well brought out in the following discussion of former Mayor McClone, who for seventeen years prior to April, 1928, was the city's chief executive:

I can tell you what I think were important accomplishments during my long term of office but they might not be judged that way by others.

For one thing, we put the cement sidewalks in, in 1912. God, how people kicked! Among those having frontage on Main Street, Nick Moe and Jake Kranzeman were the worst kickers. They tried to refuse to pay their share. They said, "We got along fine without them for all of these years and we can get along without them now."

You remember how people used to stumble over raised boards in the old wooden sidewalk? And then to think that they fought like hell against a change!

Oh well, in time old Nick Moe saw how nice cement sidewalks were

and he was about the first one in town to have them in front of his house and all through his yard.

Another accomplishment was the sewer system. You remember how we used to use that old Luck Mill flume as a sewer? Well, it was in about 1911 or 1912 that we spent \$15,000 on the main tubes of the sewer system.

Did people kick about that? Hell, yes. Joe Bell is still sore because we didn't run it down the middle of Main Street. Why, he was off his base, because it would have cost from \$7,500 to \$10,000 more to have done that.

And then there was the 200,000-gallon water tank we put in about ten or eleven years ago at a cost of \$7,500. We had trouble about that too. Old Skrip called an indignation meeting and he was all prepared to tell a pack of falsehoods when he discovered that I was present. I broke that thing up all right. There were only about twenty-five or thirty present and I soon had them disbanded.

The last thing of any importance was the water line they put in two years ago. It cost \$35,000 and it wasn't what I know is best. That is why I quit the office. I wanted to spend \$75,000 and put in a two-thousand foot tunnel to Truant Lake. As it is they will run out of water one of these dry summers—see if they don't. With the Truant Lake Basin for storage we would have had all the water we could use for all purposes.<sup>1</sup>

No, the bids weren't too high on the contracts for the work. The trouble was that Sudger [county surveyor] didn't do his duty. He didn't see that the fellows dug the ditch deep enough; that's why those fellows made so much money.

I never did have much use for Sudger's ability as an engineer. He doesn't seem to have ordinary common sense. He put a siphon in that water line and it froze the other day. If he had used his head he could have avoided the siphon and the water would run fast enough that it wouldn't freeze.

Out at the sapphire diggings he surveyed for a flume and when Deelos [construction foreman] came to put it in he found that Sudger was going to make the water run uphill. And so Deelos had him resurvey it. Sudger resurveyed it but his lines came out just the same.

<sup>1</sup> There was talk around town that McClone and Attorney Walden were to receive a large slice of graft from an outside contracting firm if they could put across the Truant Lake project. This may have been political slander however.

I'll tell you another thing he did. He went up there and surveyed for that pipe line in three feet of snow and when the snow thawed he had to survey it all over again. He spent three hundred dollars of the city's money right there for nothing because he couldn't see the big boulders which it was necessary to evade. But that wasn't all. He had to survey it a third time before he had it as poor as it is now.

That pipe line raised the charges on my water from \$1.50 to \$2.70 a month. The line won't be paid up till 1938.

There is one thing about this town: It has never been delinquent in paying up bonds or interest on bonds, when due.

The bonding people won't buy your bonds unless they are good. They really check up on you harder than the state examiner does.

When the saloon business went out we were knocked out of \$1,500 a year. That was quite an item.

Well, I should say the sporting girls did mean a lot to us for a while. When I first went in we had fifty-one or fifty-two girls who paid \$7.50 in the form of a forfeited bond.<sup>1</sup> That number was down to about eight or ten toward the last. When old Haynser was police judge, he used to think nothing of soaking them \$50 when they created a disturbance. And he used to patronize them too.

No gamblers have forfeited bonds since I went into office but I understand they have started to collect from "soft drink" parlors now.

For years we haven't charged fellows like Gulliver and Gould any water rent. What use would it be to give a bill to a county charge? And until the last year or so we didn't charge ministers or priests but a state law changed that.

I was mayor for seventeen years but I was alderman four years before that. I filled in the unexpired term of Burfee when he was put back in as county attorney; that accounts for the uneven number.

The Council has improved a hell of a lot. When I first went in I had fellows like old J. A. Spitzer, old Deardorf, old Anderell, and old Frank Tilson on the Council and it used to take till eleven-thirty to transact business which is over now at nine. Those fellows had it in for each other for business reasons and they wouldn't work together. You can imagine getting anything done with that bunch! Old Tilson wouldn't vote for anything that didn't bring trade to his store. You could always tell how he was going to vote because he always voted "No" unless it brought trade to him to vote "Yes."

<sup>1</sup> See p. 194.

There are a few bad ones today too. I had Frank McConley for two years but he wasn't re-elected. He and "Fat" O'Herron make a good couple. I wouldn't like to be forced to have much to do with them when they are old. God, you seldom see young men so crabby and disagreeable.

Oh, you get so you don't pay any attention to the kicking. People generally come around in time when you do something good.

Ed Madeen, who served several terms on the City Council, throws additional light upon the problem of running the city government of Mineville.

There was graft on that water line but that's to be expected in all public works. I was on the Council all the time that the water-line issue was up and I know all of the bids. That line cost \$35,000 and could have been done for much less. But then that's to be expected when the public is having anything done and it makes no difference whether it is in a little place like Mineville or in New York City.

That is a good little line and it is worth all it cost to the city even though it could have been done for less. There are a few little things that need to be fixed but outside of these the line will be all we need in Mineville for many years to come.

Of course, there is a water shortage now but that is because people are running their faucets full blast to keep the water from freezing. No, we won't have a water shortage here under any normal conditions.

Was there graft on the water tank? Well, I guess there was! It cost half again as much as it should. And the same can be said about the sewer.

These comments may be considered as giving an inside view of the attitudes of men who have guided Mineville's municipal affairs. They do not present the tense situations that often exist at Council meetings, nor do they tell of the long and sometimes heated discussions councilmen are likely to have with townsfolk; but they may be taken as suggestive of the typical Mineville officeholder and his plight—along with showing the struggle for social change which leaders of the town must make.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE VILLAGE SCHOOLS

#### THE TEACHER

The teacher, in Mineville, virtually occupies a political position. His work and personal life are under the minute observation of a critical public. So much is he at the mercy of public opinion that, if it turns against him, he is due to be dismissed regardless of the efficiency of his work.

The principal bears the brunt of public pressure. Hardly is he in town before some people are working for his dismissal, and if he remains three years he may count himself as having been very fortunate. The recent discharge of Principal Dilks of the high school is illustrative. During Dilk's first year there was a consensus of opinion that he was "no good," but townsfolk were loath to take formal action against him. Some people were surprised when he was given a second year, and many were dumfounded when he was selected for a third. Note the following statement of a fifteen-year-old pupil of his geometry class upon being informed that he was to return a third year:

Really! Is Dilks going to be back? I thought he was going to be out for sure.

No, I have never heard anyone say much for him. He told us in geometry class the other day that you can't suit everyone. He said, take the case of the geometry class, for example, if he failed many in the class he would be called a poor teacher while if he passed many he would be criticized for passing dumb-bells.

I guess he knows the geometry but he doesn't seem to know how to teach it very well.



This high-school girl naturally supposed that the school board would follow the tide of community opinion which had so long been predominantly against Dilks. That the normal thing did not happen is explained by the fact that the dominating figure on the school board was able to convince his colleagues that townsfolk who complained of Dilks were simply "kickers." But the next year the story was quite different. Aggressive citizens had concluded that Dilks would remain as long as "the board" included his champion, whose term was about to expire along with that of another member. These citizens thereupon convinced the county commissioners that the vacancies should be filled by men who were against Dilks. Consequently, within a month the man who was suspected of having received a fee for having brought about renewals of Dilk's contract was removed from "the board" and the principal himself was dismissed. The process of "getting Dilks" was simple when properly engineered.

Three years previously Superintendent Livingstone was ousted in a much more sensational manner. A group of indignant parents, not courageous enough to sponsor his dismissal openly, brought about the abolition of his office by breaking the consolidation of the grade and high schools. By their act each school was put under a separate administration at a great increase in expense to the taxpayers—but they "got their man."

An administrative head in the Mineville schools rarely relinquishes his duties without a feeling of bitterness because his efforts seem to have been little appreciated. Even an assistant principal is likely to be much abused, as was Mr. Rowe, who held this position in the grade school during the years 1927-28 and 1928-29. Because his students were mak-



ing low grades in arithmetic, it was alleged that he was a failure as a teacher of that subject. Dr. Lane of the state university, who was called as an expert, discovered that the fault lay in excessively high standards of work required by the principal. Standard tests given by Professor Lane revealed that the students were considerably above the average of children of states which are famous for their fine school systems. But the community and a majority of school-board members persisted in maintaining the old appraisal of Rowe whose salary was cut from \$1,700 to \$1,500. Broken-hearted because he had been doing far more work than was required of him, the sincere and fairly capable young fellow left the community in a dilapidated Model-T Ford with his wife and two small children. He was bound for a midwestern university where he intended to qualify himself for high-school work.

The ordinary school-teacher deals with fewer people than the administrator and is less likely to incur widespread community antagonisms in a short period of time. Still he is bound to occupy a position of high visibility if for no other reason than that one-fourth of the population is in attendance at the grade and high schools and this one-fourth easily keeps most of the remaining three-fourths keenly aware of schools and school-teachers.

In 192— a teacher was advised by friends that she should not apply for re-election. Hardly had she been teaching two months when it could have been said with a feeling of assurance that she would not be rehired. The principal recognized her as incompetent, while the children spread to their homes a steady flow of information in regard to her poor class discipline and her disposition to become intoxicated. Her doom was sealed when she danced with prominent citi-

zens at a Christmas dance while under the influence of liquor. It seems that the community as a whole did not realize the extent of her sex laxities since very little was said on that score excepting among young fellows. People were able to condemn this unfortunate teacher almost without restraint because she was alone in a strange community and had few supporters to bring pressure in her defense.

A striking contrast is brought out between her case and that of a "home-girl" teacher involved in a similar situation. The home girl was protected by the weight of family influence. Literally, people were afraid to talk about her excepting in a most muffled manner.

The home-girl problem has long been a thorn in the side of Mineville school boards. The task of refusing to hire her or of dismissing her is not welcomed. A not uncommon way of expediting still further pressure in her behalf is for her to have a relative on the school board. It so happens, however, that most of the Mineville home girls have been efficient teachers despite a heavier disciplinary problem which is often placed upon them by their intimacy with parent and child and the consequent tendency of the latter to call them by their first names. Perhaps, after all, her intimacy gives her an advantage over the strange teacher since it causes her to know a great deal more about the growing personalities with which she deals than could be derived from classroom contacts alone. Spontaneously she knows children in their family backgrounds and without inquiry she knows from whom she may secure added information regarding them at any time.

Four of eight teachers in the grade school are home girls. In fact, the home-girl trend in the schools is the only exception to the general tendency of college-bred native Mine-

villers to practice their professions in strange communities where they can more easily command respect. It even happens that two of these girls are recognized by the community to be the "best teachers in the school"—a rating with which successive school principals have agreed. But the probabilities are that this recognition of merit would not be current were it not for the extensive advertising given by the large family group of which the girls are members and the power of this group to inhibit adverse propaganda and action.

Withal, the home-girl teacher often resents her status. Knowing the community intimately, she is likely to sense currents of opinion against her as an "outside teacher" would not. Too, she is likely to take adverse criticism very seriously because of her lifelong intimate contacts with the critics. A citizen gave his reaction to the possibility that his sister might return home to teach as follows:

No, Laura isn't coming back to teach here. She had her application in but it is better that she didn't get it because she might do her duty and get into a mixup like the Livingstone affair. The only reason in the world why Livingstone was put out was that he disciplined some kids who had parents on the school board.

Laura is getting along fine down in New Mexico. She was going to leave and the school board visited her in a body and pleaded with her to stay at a higher salary. She consented and it is for the best. She is appreciated where she is and wouldn't be up here. Nobody is appreciated in the schools here—especially a home girl. She would never get the recognition here that she gets there.

Of course, mamma wants her back, but it is best she is not here.

The complaining parent constitutes an unpleasant part of the lot of the teacher, especially of the home girl. From pioneer days to the present there have been parents who have gone to school to give the teacher or the principal "a piece of their minds." A certain citizen of more than or-

dinary prominence issued the following tirade against Principal Dilks:

I went up there to the high school and told Dilks what I thought of him for sending Marve home with a note which said he was destroying the morale of the school. I told him I didn't object to having my children censured as long as there was no favoritism shown, but that when fellows like Dib Bankers got by without criticism I intended to buck. Here was Bankers running a gambling game every night and going to high school, and Dilks has the nerve to single out my boy because he and another boy got a little foolish and went on a hike when they should have been at school.

I didn't get very far with him, but I told him that if I ever came again I would come with my fighting clothes on.

In this instance it so happened that the principal's action was sustained by public opinion. At about the same time, however, there was sufficient feeling aroused over his attempt to control a number of other "flaming youths" to result in a mass meeting of parents. Fist fights were narrowly averted, and for months the incident was a source of gossip.

The threats of enraged parents to "lick the teacher" have never materialized in Mineville. Twenty years ago a large boy blackened a principal's eye, and about ten years ago a rebellious girl pushed a woman teacher over a row of seats, but no teacher has ever been subjected to such physical violence at the hands of a parent. And so, frequent vehement expressions like the following may be taken with a grain of salt: "They tell me that Miss Daniels choked one of the boys in her room. She has an awful temper. If she did that to a child of mine I would pull her hair out. I don't stand to have my husband punish the kids, much less an outsider."

## PUBLIC OPINION AND IMPROVEMENT OF SCHOOLS

In 1873 four pupils attended the first school in Mineville. Now the combined enrolments of the grade and high schools average about three hundred and fifty. Four times during that sixty-year period there was need for expensive new buildings and each time the taxpayers became aroused pro and con. In 1883 there was opposition to the construction of the old wooden schoolhouse by people who thought the town could "get along without it"; in 1897 outlying districts wanted their own schools instead of being required to send their children to the proposed large central school at Mineville; in 1912 there was friction over the matter of erecting a separate structure for the high school; and in 1922 people differed in regard to the matter of erecting the new gymnasium. When it is known that  $44\frac{1}{2}$  per cent of the state "tax dollar" goes toward the building and conducting of grade and high schools, this interest of local taxpayers in the issuance of school bonds is not surprising.

Interest in school elections is spasmodic. During five of the seven years from 1921 to 1927 inclusive, from 10 to 25 votes were cast. Then the gymnasium bond issue of 1922 brought out 241 votes and a complication of past and personal issues caused 215 ballots to be cast in 1927. It is noteworthy that in the latter instance the qualifications of the men or what they proposed to do if elected were not matters of moment.

Nominations for membership on the grade-school board are made at a caucus. The following is a description of the caucus of 1929 by a leading figure in Mineville's school affairs, a man who studies school situations thoroughly and who shows little hesitation at championing unpopular



causes, at whatever cost in personal popularity, if he decides they are "for the best":

Hey! Come here!

By George, you shoulda been at the caucus for nominating a school trustee this evening. I'd have given anything if your Dad could have been there. It was a scream.

O'Neil asked me if I wouldn't nominate your Dad and I said I would if he was sure your Dad would accept. He said he had seen your Dad this afternoon and that he would consent if conditions were right. And so I up and nominated the old man and then the fun began. Mrs. Sothern said there was talk that your father was against the Catholics, and O'Neil, who is a Catholic, got up and branded that a lie in no uncertain terms. And I'll have to say this much for Winans—he got up and defended your father valiantly on that point. But the most amusing thing to me was the way Winans defended the old man when Mrs. Sothern said he had been accused of dominating the board. That was such a turn-about-face from the stand he took six years ago when he cornered me at the gym and said that the grade-school board was a one-man affair. The difference now is that he has been on the board whereas before he was talking about something he knew nothing about.

O'Neil told the ladies that they weren't saying much for the rest of the board if they thought they were such weaklings that they had nothing to say. He said: "Mr. Bartlett is outspoken and he fights hard for a point. That is probably what is responsible for this talk about domination. But that is just the kind of man we want; we don't want a man who isn't a fighter for what he thinks is right nor a man who isn't honest enough to say what he thinks."

Yes, we left the nominations open; we left them open for fully a half-hour but no one else was nominated. I think the women wanted to nominate a woman but they didn't have the nerve.

They thought your father shouldn't be on the board because he has no kids in school. I told them they would have to go some to find a man who takes as great an interest in the school—kids or no kids in school. And I minced no words when I gave the lie to that Catholic-prejudice business. I told them that I was pretty sure I could go back into the minutes and find at least five Catholic girls who were nominated by your father while I was on the board and while Vatis Gage was chairman. And those girls were elected too.



I know the reason for that Catholic stuff; it was none other than because we fired Mrs. Spenson. We fired her because she got so god-damned disagreeable, contrary, and strong-headed that she would take orders from no one. We hired her and we fired her, but it was not because she was a Catholic.

All Mineville school-board members would not be expected to show the aggressive courage of the man just quoted. As a matter of fact, sometimes a school board is dominated by men who are very reticent to take sides on issues or to sponsor unpopular causes. While such a condition might prevail anywhere, there is no doubt that the average Mineville school-board member is often inhibited from fighting staunchly for the good of his school merely because he fears he will antagonize friends and others. Some business men have frankly stated that they will not serve on a school board because they will make enemies and hence lose trade at their stores. But such individual cases of the ill effect of intimacy should not be magnified above their true importance in the total situation, for in the long run men like that quoted above have triumphed. In fact, ignorance of school matters, carelessness, and (in one case) dishonesty have been the greatest faults to be found with Mineville school boards.

It was largely due to the moral support of a progressive school board that Mr. Burger, the grade-school principal, was able to establish student self-government in the face of widespread opposition in the community. Abuse upon abuse was heaped upon Burger. Often he was broken spirited because of the lack of appreciation of his efforts, but the school-board members always assured him that they were behind him and gave him new courage. A vociferous critic of the student self-government plan was the mayor who complained:

Burger is another one I would put out if I had my way. He does some things that are pretty crazy.

Well, for instance, his student self-government business. Any man who would put that into operation with grammar-school kids doesn't know his business. It just simply isn't in the cards to get good results out of giving such youngsters so much power.

Burger isn't fair by giving the leadership to a few who happen to lead in scholarship. He favors a few. It isn't fair to kids who work hard but aren't bright enough to lead. Just because a kid is born bright he shouldn't have privileges over those who weren't born bright. The favors should be passed around.

All I've got to say is that I'd have done something to get him out if my kid were in that school again this year. But she is in high school now, and so I don't know how things are going over there now.

At the time the mayor spoke, Burger's student self-government plan was already a pronounced success. Indeed, those urbanites who think of a small-town school as a simple and archaic affair will be fairly astonished at the complexity and modernity of this self-government plan, which is only one item in the Mineville grade school. Assistant Principal Rowe described it as follows:

The Student Council is composed of the eighth-grade class. This class elects the Student Council officers: the president, the vice-president, and the secretary. These officers preside over the student self-government under supervision.

All serious disciplinary problems come before the Student Council. The student police court handles minor cases.

Yes, we've tried to make it a miniature of the world outside and it works well. It is no longer an experiment.

The upper floor votes to elect the police, who must be eighth-graders. I suppose this is taxation without representation, but the lower four grades never complain that they do not vote.

The police are paid ten cents an hour out of Student Council funds.

This money is derived from picture shows, ice-cream sales, student donations, and from the students' exchange bureau. The Student Council runs an exchange bureau at which pupils dispose of most any-

thing they may wish to dispose of and which is in turn bought by other students. Some of the materials are not bought but are sold on a commission basis.

We have two sorts of yellow slips: one for the teachers and one for the student police. The offender's name, his offense, and the name of the policeman or teacher appears on the slip along with that of witnesses. You see, the police often don't want to assume full responsibility for a description of an offense and so they bring in some witnesses to help out.

The police court meets as often as necessary—usually twice a week. It meets whenever enough yellow slips have accumulated. There were sixteen this evening.

Mr. Burger acts as police judge this year. I was judge last year. I used to think I put the cases through speedily but you ought to see him. He gives them very little chance to explain.

The secretary to the police judge makes the rounds of the classes on the day of police court. This secretary reads the names of those who are to appear. He reads them before the classes, and this helps because the students don't like such publicity. The teacher in charge recognizes him and discontinues class work until he has read his list.

In court the secretary reads the name of the offender, the offense, the slip-writer, and the names of witnesses, if there are any.

They usually plead guilty, but sometimes it is necessary to continue a case over several sessions in order to accumulate evidence and bring up more witnesses.

No, we have very few lookers-on in court. We haven't encouraged such curiosity-seekers and somehow they stay away.

The sentences are nearly always in terms of work, and cleaning the manual-training room is the standard job for the work gang. Last year we had a rock gang. You see, the athletic field was filled in and the dirt hauled contained a great many rocks. The boys carried these rocks from the field. You can see the rocks over there on the lower edge of the field.

As soon as the weather improves, the boys will be put to work at cleaning the school yard.

One of the student police is in charge of the work gang.

There are three student police: a boy, a girl, and a chief who may be either a boy or a girl. The girl police is necessary because she

patrols, among other places, the "girls only." The chief has always been a boy, by the way.

You can get a copy of the Student Council rules. There is a framed set of them upstairs by the fountain and another set by the fountain downstairs. I think you will find about fifty offenses listed.

It is usually a simple matter to tell whether an offense is serious enough to go to the Student Council rather than to the police court, but there are times when the true seriousness of a case does not come out until it has a hearing in the police court first.

Mr. Burger or I are nearly always present at Student Council meetings. If we see things are going unjustly we can usually guide them by a few well-pointed suggestions. But they don't wait for us if we aren't on hand. Why, the other day they had disposed of some important business before one of us arrived on the scene.

They can be depended upon to do pretty well. They expelled George Daniels from office when he was president of the Student Council. He was caught smoking in the school building. Yes, they go through impeachment proceedings as if they meant it.

Work isn't always available for the offenders and so it piles up toward the end of the year to a point at which it cannot be done before the vacation sets in. To remedy this situation Mr. Burger has issued a decree that ten hours of work shall be equivalent to one application of the hose<sup>1</sup> at the end of the year.

Bill Tomich applied for an application of the hose tonight when he received five hours for smoking in the building. He has been working nearly every night all year and yet he is so many hours behind that he decided to take a licking now rather than wait till the end of the year for it. He said he had too much time to work out.

You'd be surprised how some of the hard characters brace up when given responsibility on the police force. Some of our best police have come from the trouble-makers. Nick Bovich makes a good policeman.

They are given responsibility, and teachers feel free to call upon them to take charge of the class in case they must leave the room.

You can't suit parents. They don't want their kids to be given physical punishment, neither do they want student self-government, in which we try to do away with physical punishment. Some of them

<sup>1</sup> A piece of garden hose is the traditional instrument of torture.

say that the good old ways are best, and then they kick at the good old ways. That's to be expected.

It would be a shame if Mr. Burger's successor next year were to abolish the Student Council after all this trouble has been gone through. The present underclassmen would regret it because they look forward to the time when they shall be in the eighth grade and members of the Student Council and eligible to be student police.

At present Principal Burger has been gone for two years and student self-government as instituted by him is still in force. Complaint against it has largely subsided and perhaps would never have been serious had there been a parent-teacher's association in the community which could have fostered co-operation and understanding between parents and the school. The only substitute for such an organization is the *Grade School Times*, a school newspaper which appears every six weeks of the school year. For each grade this paper contains at least one mimeographed sheet. Then there are other sections dealing with classes such as art, manual arts, and the like. The *Times* makes some contribution toward keeping parents in touch with the school, but it is an excellent means of distributing educational propaganda which is not well taken advantage of. For each child receives a copy in which he takes pride and which he is quite certain to take home.

Another innovation which might have flourished had it been assisted by a parent-teacher's association was the kindergarten established in 1929. Lack of appreciation of values to be derived from kindergarten training might easily have been done away with in public discussion, and perhaps the main drawback, the fact that a townswoman was the teacher, would have been reduced to the vanishing-point. The weight of this last factor is shown in the general agreement, among those qualified to judge, that had the first



teacher been a stranger instead of a townswoman, the kindergarten would have been a pronounced instead of a mild success in terms of enrolment. Whereas some parents confused their antagonism for the home teacher and her family with their attitudes toward the kindergarten and hence sought every opportunity to discredit kindergarten training, they would normally have conceded that a strange teacher was an expert and have directed their attention toward the actual merits of the kindergarten.

Most improvement in the schools, however, takes place in ways which do not attract the attention of the public. School boards buy expensive equipment, and improvements in curriculum and pedagogy are made without arousing more than a few critics, in most cases. But school boards and school men must ever be wary, for the most harmless of events is likely to arouse a personal bias in an influential person and unexpectedly set the community agog.

#### EDUCATIONAL ADVANTAGES

The schools of the state compare favorably with those of the United States as a whole. Within the past decade the Russell Sage Foundation once gave them first, and on the succeeding year third place in the country. Hence when the state school inspector places the Mineville Grade School high among the schools of its class in the state it can be seen that the pride which Minevillers have in this school is somewhat justified. A departmental plan is followed, that is, while most of the teachers are nominally in charge of a grade they are actually specialists in arithmetic, history, grammar, music, manual training, art, sewing, penmanship, etc. Scholarship is stressed. The high-ranking scholars of each of the eight grades are advertised to the community, in the *Mineville Mail*, and in the *Grade School Times*. Their



names also have a permanent place on conspicuous blackboards in the halls of the school. Similarly, the best work of the season is put on display twice a year. It is a cherished desire of most of the children to have some masterpiece upon which visiting mothers may gaze, on these exhibition days.

No such prestige of accomplishment is in vogue in the high school, where the outstanding scholar is not in good repute unless he seems to get his lessons without effort. Among the students the most popular teacher is likely to be one who knows his subject well but does not require much work in addition to providing an opportunity for cheating, if such assistance is needed. Severity is resented. Teachers labor under a disciplinary problem unknown in large schools or in larger communities. They jeopardize their popularity with the students and in the community as a whole if they are stern with offenders. Past history has shown they may easily lose their jobs by arousing the wrath of influential families. Even though the children of such families be positive nuisances, the teacher is obliged to proceed as if they are no different from the rank and file of the students. There are cases, however, which indicate that not so much care need be taken in dealing with children of less influential parents.

Disparagement of the school is a community habit. Successive principals and teachers have sought to counteract this feeling by means of articles in the *Mineville Mail*. Throughout the year they have heralded to the people the achievements of individual students and of the school as a whole. Each year when the institution is placed on the accredited lists of the North Central and Western State associations of high schools, the *Mail* features a somewhat extravagant article entitled "Local High School Given High Honor." As for the actual caliber of the school we can only

say that it is perhaps an average small-town high school. A hundred students are given instruction by the principal and five teachers. The standard high-school courses are offered, including manual training; domestic science; general science; chemistry; physics; mechanical drawing; algebra; geometry; trigonometry; agriculture; Latin; English; ancient, general, and American history; and a broad course of commercial subjects. There is a high-school students' association which has lofty ideals but accomplishes little. The officers of the association do the work, while the rest of the students scarcely realize that they are members. Considerable interest is taken in athletics, but the lack of sympathy for the school which seems so prevalent in the community may be due largely to the fact that winning teams are not produced. Mineville is much like a college alumni group: it demands winning teams if it is to think its school is up to par. But the enrolment is too small to include many stars, and those who are had are usually so refractory that, in competition with larger neighboring schools, the local boys rarely make a favorable showing.

With all the seemingly obvious faults of the little high school, we have shown elsewhere<sup>1</sup> that a rather large proportion of its graduates finish college. Aside from matters brought about by stringent finances, its crying need at present seems to be for a parent-teacher's association which will bring the townsfolk and teachers into closer sympathy with one another. Mineville could well follow the example of its small sister-communities, Hay, Mormonville, and Junction, who have a most excellent parent-teacher's association and make their consolidated high school a community center.

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 256-60.

## CHAPTER XVII

### CHURCHES WITHOUT CONGREGATIONS

#### A COMPARISON OF DENOMINATIONAL STRENGTHS

There are four struggling churches in Mineville: Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Episcopalian. Excepting the Catholics, who constitute about one-sixth of the population,

TABLE XVIII

	Adults	Minors	Total
Methodist.....	172	146	318
Catholic.....	162	97	259
Presbyterian.....	121	70	191
Lutheran.....	75	32	107
Episcopal.....	38	24	62
Serbian National.....	11	26	37
Latter Day Saints.....	10	2	12
Seventh Day Advent.....	5	2	7
Congregationalist.....	2	1	3
Christian Science.....	3	.....	3
Jewish.....	2	1	3
Baptist.....	2	.....	2
Rosecrucian.....	2	.....	2
Theosophy.....	1	.....	1
None.....	117	50	167
Total.....	.....	.....	1,172

little interest is shown in the church. Nine out of ten of the remaining people in the town are frankly indifferent and rarely if ever enter the church door. Consequently, the figures shown in Table XVIII, secured in a church-membership and preference survey, indicate mostly "preference," with all the vagueness as to actual religious life which the term implies.

The figures shown were compiled from data collected by Rev. Blackwell of the Methodist church. Upon perusing the figures and the raw data an average Mineviller said:

Look at all the Methodists! That's a good joke. When people didn't know what to say they said they were Methodists. That's about the easiest thing to think of when a Methodist minister asks you what you are.

There's Jerry Ogden! Since when did that moonshiner get to be a Methodist? I've known him all my life and he's never been to church excepting to a few funerals. And there's Mrs. Pettigrew, and the Houstons, and these Finns and Swedes! Those figures aren't worth much.

As a matter of fact, the strong Protestant preference tends to mean that the people are non-Catholics more than that they have an affiliation worth mentioning with any denomination. They seem to be more certain of what they are not than of what they are, denominationally.

Again excepting the Catholic church, attendance figures tell a long and sorry story. Rev. Blackwell counted the attendance at the Methodist church from February 14 to April 14, 1929. It averaged eighteen at the morning and twenty-seven at the evening services—figures which represent the high-water mark of the year. Truly, during very cold, warm, or disagreeable weather congregations of from eight to twelve persons often occur for several Sundays in succession. And this church does not stand alone in weakness, since the Presbyterian has an attendance only slightly larger while the Episcopal is so feeble that on one Sunday only two persons were present at the evening services.

Outnumbered by over two to one in "preference," the Catholic church has an attendance which is much larger than the combined figure of the three Protestant denominations. This fact is all the more striking when it is taken into

account that the Protestant churches are able to draw many of their most loyal attenders from families who are members of other Protestant churches which do not have churches in Mineville—notably the Lutherans. Father Hogan gives the following description of his church attendance:

There are sixty-six Catholic families here, counting widows like Mrs. Dugan and Mrs. Callaway. Of the sixty-six families, fifty-six are 100 per cent attenders. Then there are four families in which both sides are Catholics but in which no one goes to church. In this class I put such people as Hadler and Herb Bryant.

There are six families in which someone goes. These are mostly mixed marriages. In this class are people like the Hutchins family where the oldest boy and Eleanor attend but some of the rest never come. In that family the father was a Catholic but the stepfather is not.

I have about ten single churchgoers. That doesn't count fellows like Pat O'Hara and Rockabrandner who are out prospecting most of the time.

Altogether, I have 265 members. Twenty, at least, of these are under seven years of age.

We don't have many who aren't regular in attendance—by "regular" I mean coming three Sundays out of four. Many never miss.

This fidelity of attendance is an index of the important place of the church in the lives of Mineville's Catholics. Another sign is their group solidarity, which causes them, like so many minority groups, to exercise influence in community social life out of proportion to their number.

#### THE CHURCH LEADERS

*The Catholic church.*—Father Hogan is an Irishman thirty-six years of age. He is rated as intelligent but says he does not study much because he had his fill of studying while at college. With the thoroughness characteristic in his church he delves into the problems which confront him in Mine-

ville. The matter of raising money is among his chief preoccupations.

Money is hard to get. I've tried one thing after another and nothing is dependable. The card parties used to be good for revenue, but now I have a hard time to pay for the prizes. They haven't been any good since last fall.

I put on a picnic at Geraldtown Lake and made \$600 but wouldn't have made a thing if it hadn't been for the Gold people who attended. Then I made \$125 on a dance. I didn't put on the dance. I don't go up at all, but if my men want to put on a dance it is all right with me just so they hand over the profits.

I had Gus McDougal [present sheriff] up there once to keep down the drinking. Nothing seems to do much good.

I don't know what I'm going to do next. I made \$200 on a novel bazaar but that was because it was novel. And I made \$125 at a basket social at Sand Creek.

My people are getting tired of putting on social functions for the purpose of raising money. For instance, they will put on a chicken dinner and make \$90 after contributing the food and the work. And so not long ago they requested that I solicit money instead of putting on a money-making affair and the result was \$87.50—and think of all the trouble I was saved!

I bawl my people out twice a year even if I have to manufacture a reason. It's good for them. I do it in June and December. I get after them about money twice a year too, and they listen and act when I do.

Father Hogan is fortunate in that he can "get away" with "bawling out" his people. He can remind them in no uncertain terms for several Sundays in succession that money must be forthcoming. He can sermonize on local social problems and complain to his flock about the way they are "raising" their children. No other clergyman in town can scold his people severely and get consistently good results. The most well-deserved criticism causes Protestants to say: "I didn't go to church to hear that kind of stuff. I don't need



him to tell me how to raise my children." Such an attitude grows in part out of weak allegiance to the institutions and in part from the intimacy of the community which easily creates contempt for the minister's ability. This condition reduces his usefulness in the community.

*The Methodist church.*—No Protestant pastor in town dominates his flock as does Father Hogan. In fact, the Protestant pastor must often make so many concessions to the women who act as his chief lieutenants that he feels himself to be a puppet. Such was the plight of Rev. Blackwell of the Methodist church although he was one of the most intelligent persons in the community. Rev. Blackwell spent two years in Mineville prior to his departure in August, 1930. Armed with a Master's degree from a leading university, he arrived in the town with high hopes of building up the church. But he had little inspiration; there was nothing with which to build. The people complained because he gave them "too many facts and not enough religion"—in other words, he was not sufficiently bent toward emotionalism. They also objected that his thought was not connected because he did not sufficiently prepare his sermons. They did not realize his side of the story, which was:

It's hard for a man to work hard all week in order to prepare morning and evening sermons for Sunday and then to be greeted by from eight to twenty people. It's more than I can do to work myself into an emotional tension over an empty church. Besides, a fellow's sermons are likely to be personal matters. He knows his little handful of people so well that he almost unconsciously finds himself saying something that will not irritate this one too much or that one too much. And then the intelligent people wonder why I don't deliver better sermons.

Not long after the Rev. Blackwell had spoken these words he departed for a part of the country where churchgoing is

more popular, his next pastorate being in a large New England city.

*The Presbyterian church.*—The opposite of Rev. Blackwell was the Presbyterian minister, Rev. Brooks, who might be described as follows: age—seventy-four years; mental set—old-fashioned minister who did not want his preconceived notions disturbed; and demeanor—very pompous. Brook's age and aristocratic manner were important factors in giving him stronger control over his flock than that had by the twenty-six-year-old Blackwell who was bent too much toward scientific facts and was characteristically lacking in pomp. In explaining the disparity between their ages Rev. Blackwell said:

My district superintendent tells me that in a town like this you usually find three kinds of ministers. He says you find a young fellow who is too inexperienced to be much good, an old fellow who has seen his best days, or a man between these ages who never was or will be any good.

*The Episcopal church.*—Rev. George of the Episcopal church is a part-time pastor. His main charge is in another town some sixty miles away. He holds services twice a month, is rated as "intelligent," and brings with him a background as a social worker in New York City. He would prefer not to "waste his time" in Mineville but has no other alternative.

#### CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

The church organizations of Mineville are made up almost entirely of women and girls. The choirs are struggling groups of women that must depend upon their ministers to sing male parts. Two Catholic men occasionally lend their vocal efforts in their church but all churches are obliged to

select male vocal talent from among non-churchgoing men, for special occasions such as Christmas services. In the Protestant churches one often sees the pathetic situation of a choir singing to a congregation no larger than itself (from four to six persons). Truly, again neglecting the Catholics,

TABLE XIX

	No. Members	Usual Attendance	Meetings per Month
Catholic:			
Altar Society (all Catholic women)...	75	15	1
*Choir.....			
Episcopal:			
*Choir.....			
St. Mary's Guild.....	14	9	1
Girl's Guild.....	9	6	1
Methodist:			
*Choir.....			
Ladies' Aid.....	32	16	2
Epworth League.....	10	6	4
Pricillas.....	30	18	2
Presbyterian:			
*Choir.....			
King's Daughters.....	25	18	1
Princess Circle.....	23	12	1
Christian Endeavor...	9	7	4

\* Figures as to membership and attendance at choir practice are too indefinite to be entered.

the community as a whole would seem to agree with the prominent citizen who said: "The church is all right for women and children but it hasn't much to offer me."

*The Altar Society.*—The Altar Society is a Catholic ladies' organization which is very proficient in raising money for the church. The priest has a great deal of influence over its policies.

*The Ladies' Aid.*—The Ladies' Aid of the Methodist church has an average attendance of about twenty-five. Some of its regular attenders are among those who are poor in church attendance. This, however, is more important for the strength of the church than would be its converse since the "Aid" is the money-raising organization.

*The Pricillas.*—The Pricillas is a sewing and "talking" club of the Methodist ladies. It differs from the Ladies' Aid in that it includes younger women and outsiders and is avowedly social. Its attendance varies a great deal but sometimes is as high as forty.

*The Epworth League.*—For nine years (1919-28) Rev. Tice was the pastor of the Methodist church. He devoted most of his energies to work with young people and succeeded in making the Epworth League a very lively organization. In fact, for three years it was rated as the best in the state. Banners and a large cup are on display in the church as evidence of the achievement. During that heyday the League was a burlesque on religion. Its members were more interested in using meetings for the purpose of making contacts with the opposite sex than as opportunities to partake of religious experience. Even the pastor discovered several of them engaged in practices not supposed to be typical of youth of the best-regulated families. Still, they won the state championship because they had high-attendance records, good basket-ball teams, good debate teams, and other accomplishments on which Rev. Tice was able to send high scores to headquarters.

Like other local pastors, Rev. Tice could attract few adults to his church. He sought the youth as the most fruitful avenue for church work in Mineville. His spectacular basket-ball teams directed the attention of the community

upon his church. He tried to emphasize the religious function of the League and to make it a thriving organization at the same time. But Mineville's most alert young people turned out to be lively in more ways than one—particularly the vigorous and athletic boys. In the end this was very clear to Rev. Tice who said, "I did my best. I did no harm and might have done some good." His successor specialized upon the religious function of the League, and hence won no cups and had a much smaller attendance record—almost entirely of girls.

*The King's Daughters.*—The King's Daughters is the Presbyterian equivalent to the Methodist Ladies' Aid. It is a live organization. In 1928 it raised \$1,000, and it raises \$800 on ordinary years. At each meeting two women entertain, that is, they furnish the refreshments. Numerous outsiders attend since the function is social and not religious.

*The Princess Circle.*—The Princess Circle is made up of the younger Presbyterian women. Outsiders are even more in evidence here than at the King's Daughters and the function is more frankly social. Nevertheless, the organization contributes from two hundred to three hundred dollars per year to the coffers of the church.

*Christian Endeavor.*—Christian Endeavor, the Presbyterian young people's society, has been as large as the Epworth League when the latter was at its height (twenty-five to thirty), but it has never attained prominence in the community because its activities have not been sensational. At present it has an attendance of about ten as compared with about five in the Epworth League.

*St. Mary's Guild.*—St. Mary's Guild, the Episcopal women's society, has fourteen members. It raises about one hundred dollars per year.

*The Girl's Guild.*—The Girl's Guild is composed of nine Episcopal girls (not young women) and is a very weak group.

#### RELIGIOUS PREJUDICE

There is no apparent reason for assuming that religious prejudice has played a larger part in Mineville than in towns in general. Yet such prejudice has been prominently in evidence since earliest pioneer days. Like the Ku Klux Klan of today, the American Protective Association of a half-century ago was concerned with protecting the American nation against the supposed menace of the Catholic church. But whereas the Ku Klux Klan is said never to have had more than seven members in the town and never did more (that was discovered) than to startle the populace occasionally by making a flaming cross on a mountain side, the A.P.A.'s were of profound influence. One of their members said:

The A.P.A. excitement was a big thing here but I can't tell you the date. It seems to me it must have been between '75 and '80. Anti-Catholic feeling was strong all over the country at that time, but it wasn't called the "A.P.A. movement" everywhere.

There were about fifty A.P.A.'s here and I was one of them. I could tell you a lot about it but I guess I won't. It wouldn't do to tell too much about it. Well, I can tell a little. Every member had five hundred rounds of ammunition and a rifle.

I don't know how much the Catholics were armed but, anyway, we were ready and we expected trouble—but it never came excepting in quarrels between individuals.

I'm still an A.P.A. at heart. You will find that that old feeling was so strong in the A.P.A. members that they never overcame it. Why, not long ago I heard one of the old-timers cursing a fellow and he couldn't think of anything worse than to call him an A.P.A.

Yes, Duncan was an A.P.A. He was absolutely against Catholics. He wouldn't hire a Catholic when he was superintendent of the Luck.



Still, a woman who has lived in the town for fifty-three years said that "denominational lines weren't so sharply drawn before the churches were built [1887-93] and strong group policies were started by each church."

Persons who have been leaders in Mineville's three Protestant churches for nearly half a century agree that the church is a dwindling institution in the community. But this does not mean a lack of religious conviction and prejudice, for the most rabid anti-Catholics in the community appear to be persons who rarely, if ever, attend church. In fact overt religious prejudice is confined mainly to that between Catholic and non-Catholic—not merely between members of churches.

Individual outbursts of Catholic or anti-Catholic prejudice are everyday occurrences in the community. Group manifestations are recognized in politics and business where terms in common usage are: "the Catholic vote," "the Catholic trade," "the Methodist trade," and the like. Although precise indices as to extent of these influences are not available, there often is general agreement that the "Catholic vote" defeated a political candidate or that the existence of a certain grocery depended almost entirely upon the "Catholic trade."

Religious prejudice is a many-sided phenomenon in the community. It is brought to mind as much by its absence in some cases as by its presence in others. The most outstanding example of magnanimity arises in connection with the patronizing of church dinners, which are among the chief means of raising money. Regardless of which church "gives" the dinner, members of all the rest feel obliged to attend. These affairs are also attended by numerous people who seldom go to church. In fact, the "best people" are

supposed to be present to help the good cause, even though they never attend church.

Mineville's Catholics and non-Catholics recognize that religious prejudice is a secret factor in countless situations. They are likely to be suspicious of one another and to be alert to explain much of one another's behavior as being due to religious prejudice. The Catholics as a rule make a noble display of tolerance and complain of the bigotry of non-Catholics although their own prejudice is plainly evidenced in their group solidarity. "The Catholics are clannish," non-Catholics say. "Hit a Catholic," declared one of the Protestant pastors, "and you have the whole group on your neck because you have created a religious issue in spite of yourself." And still some of the best-known enmities in town are between fellow-Catholics just as the strongest of antagonisms may arise among members of the same family. In truth, the situation is fraught with many contradictions. A person strongly influenced by religious bias in one situation may exhibit striking magnanimity in another. For instance, a leading citizen said: "I would never vote for one of those damned Catholics if the other fellow is anywhere near as good, but you be sure to keep this quiet because it would ruin me if people knew I feel that way." And yet this same man counts among his best friends Catholics who evince no outward concern in respect to his religion.

#### THE NON-CHURCHGOERS

Most Minevillers must be listed under the head of "non-churchgoers." In this group are the great majority of the prominent men, although their wives attend as a rule. Such men attend occasionally as concessions to the insistence of their wives when the church program offers something other

than religious entertainment, i.e., when their children "speak pieces" at Christmas. The attitudes of four community leaders are summed as follows:

1. "Can't be bothered."
2. Believes in sending children to Sunday school. Very impatient about things he does not believe and he hears too many of these in church. Contributes to a church. Too busy to attend.
3. "Can't stand the bunk," but believes in "helping what is supposed to be a good cause," and so he contributes to a church. Masonic lodge his substitute. Too busy to attend.
4. Doesn't like some leaders of his church. Contributes regularly. Masonic lodge his substitute. Too busy to attend.

While some Minevillers attend church because they feel a satisfying effect upon their status by being placed among those whom they think of as the "better people," even more stay away because of a belief that "anyone with any sense has better use for his time." Among these latter are numerous persons who are radical and outspoken on religious matters, running the whole gamut of categories from "atheist" and "infidel" to those who prefer to "read and interpret the Bible in my own way." There is no lack of strong religious convictions among these people. The majority of them seem to sum up their religious creeds approximately as did the man who avowed:

There must be a God or some sort of supreme power and there must be a hereafter, but I don't see what church has to do with it. I try to do the right thing by everybody and that is more than I can say for a lot of the crooks I see going to church. As long as I'm on the square on this earth I don't see why I haven't as good a chance to go to heaven as people who go to church.

#### THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH

The Catholic church shows no signs of deterioration numerically but personal interviews reveal that the priest

might be very much surprised to know the extent to which his people do not accept many time-worn commandments of the church. His church attendance and contributions are still at high tide, however, and so one must look far into the future to venture predictions as to the eventual effect of such attitudes.

It is among the Protestant churches that the greatest changes seem close to hand. Foremost of these is the consolidation of Protestant churches, which is being urged by some of the leading members of these churches as the sensible solution for Protestant indifference in the community. Had not the Methodists and Presbyterians made expensive improvements upon their church properties during the last decade, consolidation might have been enforced by the present (1931) financial depression. But the struggle and aspiration in which each group has been involved in paying off its indebtedness has heightened its reluctance to surrender its autonomy. As a theoretical proposition most of the members of the three Protestant churches readily concede the need for consolidation, but, as a practical proposition, no one seems anxious to press the matter and many would like their church to have a lion's share in dictating the terms of the merger. Younger people say, "We'll have to wait until the old folks die off"; most old folks "pass the buck" by saying that their district superintendents are opposed to consolidation; and the rank and file are fearsome that the leaders of the various churches could not learn to "get along with one another." And underlying all of this is a financial argument: "Each church will lose its missionary money, and the total amount of missionary money is over a thousand dollars a year, and so consolidation really won't mean pooling of our present resources."

As things stand, Mineville may wait many years for consolidation of Protestant churches to be achieved, or it may wait but a few months. Perhaps an effort will even be made which will end in failure. At any rate, there seems to be no other hope of drawing the most educated Protestant men to church and thus of making churchgoing popular. For the caliber of the small-town clergyman has much to do with the reluctance of such men to attend, and only by a pooling of resources of the churches can an adequate salary be paid to secure a pastor of sufficient merit to command respect.<sup>1</sup> Until this is done these men, and many women too, will continue to feel as does old Ebert who said, "Church takes too much time for what you get out of it."

There are many other things to be considered in prognosticating the future of the Protestant churches in Mineville however. One of these is the seven-day work week which either conflicts with church hours or leaves the men too tired to be disposed to attend church for ordinary services. There seems to be no remedy for this situation aside from that of making church so interesting or popular that the tired man will attend.

Most of the regular attenders among Protestant men do not work on Sunday. They come from the white-collared group. But even this group is poorly represented, for Sunday is a most excellent day to go motoring or fishing.

Changing membership is also a problem. For instance, Rev. Newborn, pastor of the Methodist church from 1915 to 1919, secured twelve new members, of whom but one re-

<sup>1</sup> The annual budgets for the churches in 1928 were: Catholic, \$3,300; Methodist, \$1,800; Presbyterian, \$1,800; Episcopalian, \$350. The Catholics supply all their money while each of the Protestant denominations receives help from its Board of Home Missions.



mained in town at the end of the twelfth month. Such conditions arise largely because the pastor in his efforts to enlist new members is much more successful among newcomers than among the "old guard."

Work among children and "young people" is yearly presenting a greater problem. In 1929 the Sunday schools were the weakest they had been in forty years despite the much larger than average population which the town was enjoying. The Presbyterian Sunday school then reached a low point in attendance of between thirty-five and forty per Sunday, while the Methodist ranged from twenty-five to thirty-five. Throughout the years the former has been larger than the latter, one averaging over fifty in attendance to the other's fifty. In the heyday of each Sunday school, attendance of over one hundred was not uncommon. Shortly before the war there occurred a period when the Presbyterian Sunday school was inflated temporarily up to one hundred and forty. And this lively period occurred when the town was "dead." Indeed, even the Episcopal Sunday school had as many as forty-seven in attendance during that Golden Age—as compared with a total membership (men, women, and children) of thirty-seven at present.

The "young people" of the Protestant churches are an even greater problem than the children. If they have not severed active connection with the church before finishing the grade school, they are almost certain to do so upon entering high school or soon thereafter—particularly the boys.

In conclusion, the kind of Protestant church which will cope with the situation in Mineville may be suggested by contrasting the past when the churches prospered with the present when they are weak. Formerly, attendance at



church and participation in church work was quite prominent as a leisure-time activity; nowadays the automobile, the movies, and the radio offer competing ways of spending leisure time. Ladies' organizations of the church were once respected because they were imbued with a desire to serve the community; in recent years they have lost respect by being more purely social and self-seeking, only rarely occupying themselves with charity. Finally, the people may have been less sophisticated in the early nineties and they did not have highly paid radio pastors to keep them home; hence the need today for a pastor of higher caliber to attract the most educated non-Catholic men of the community, a leader who can be had only by consolidating all the Protestant churches.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### SICKNESS, AGE, AND DEATH

#### SICKNESS

In the early days of Mineville it was necessary to go sixty miles on horseback in order to get a doctor. In about 1876 a druggist, "Doc" Brown, came. He knew more about health than anyone else in town and so for a number of years he acted as the physician, although in cases of childbirth the women preferred to assist one another. As the community boomed, more highly trained medical doctors came. For over forty years (until 1929) it had two or more of them. Now it has but one, and he is not overworked except during epidemics. Another practitioner attempted to establish a practice in the fall of 1929. In less than two months he had departed, seeing that much as the people disparaged the ability of the established physician, they were not inclined "to try that new fellow."

Health in Mineville is very good, the physician says. Epidemics, which were most virulent in the old days, are now effectively held in check. Every year, however, one or more children's diseases surges through the community and becomes a matter uppermost in the minds of mothers for weeks. Then there are other times when "everybody" has a cold, "the flu," or pneumonia!

In the larger perspective of the community's history the most serious major diseases have been influenza, mill consumption, miner's consumption, and pneumonia. The average Mineviller does not have to go to the rather poorly

kept death records at the city hall to learn of this fact. He knows only too well the deadly virulence of these diseases among his friends and acquaintances in the years gone by. But a glance at those deathbooks in the city hall will bring the fact to him more boldly. Here and there an epidemic has caused bunches of deaths to be ascribed to diphtheria, measles, scarlet fever, smallpox, or typhoid. But aside from epidemics, he can turn page after page—of those names of persons he knew so well—in which deaths from other causes than the four major diseases are exceptions rather than the rule.

Mineville's local color even extends to its diseases, especially in mill consumption and miner's consumption. Old-timers say that the average man who worked two years in some of the older mills became a victim of mill consumption and that many a robust young fellow succumbed in six months. As for social diseases, the community doctor states that Mineville is not unique, having a very small amount of syphilis offset by a higher than average percentage of acute gonorrhea among married women. At the same time, the high altitude causes nervous persons or those with weak hearts to labor under a disadvantage in the community, while the dry atmosphere is a boon to rheumatics.

Falling in line with the national health movement, Mineville has a goodly representation of health and diet fans. But those most preoccupied with physical ailments appear to be persons who would be so, aside from any "health movement." Of this sort is a townswoman of more than ordinary intelligence—the wife of a recently deceased leading citizen. Her health is her hobby. "Everyone" in town knows that it is predestined to become a part of any lengthy conversation in which she engages. For over thirty years

her husband had pampered her because of her weak heart, and now she expects the same attentions from other people. "No one cares anything about me," she says. "I don't see why people are so mean to me." And the only meanness that the people actually inflict upon her is that they do not wait upon her. Owing mainly to her selfishness, she irritates people exceedingly and has never received the sympathy her condition has justified. So, instead of going to her aid, most of the people prefer to have little to do with her. She has built a wall around herself without knowing it.

The business of being sick is a chief preoccupation of many others, especially women or old folks of both sexes. The immemorial habit of talking of operations and of divulging health life-histories is prevalent. The oldest resident is one of those with a strong disposition to talk of health and sickness. His health record consists of two blood transfusions, having been "cut open" four times, having observed blood "spurting like a geyser" from his stomach as doctors were bewildered as to methods of checking it, having been in bed "for eight months at one time and three months at another time," etc., etc.

Because sickness is a crisis in life it must be expected to leave deep impressions upon sufferers and their loved ones. But in the small town, personal interest in others is so great that the "whole" community tends to be deeply impressed during the serious sickness of a resident. When Dr. Paige was in his last illness, for instance, the community followed his condition hour by hour. "How is 'Doc' Paige this morning?" was on everyone's lips. And typical replies would be, "The last I heard he was improving a little at ten o'clock" or "They say he hasn't a chance."

## AGE

The matter of growing older is an important phenomenon. It has implications for everyone in the community, from the infant who has not yet attained a conception of time to the person who resents the passing of each day as bringing him that much closer to death. Truly there are the Mineville children for whom each added birthday is an occasion of pride and enthusiasm, and the townswomen who "haven't told their ages in years"; there are those who grow old gracefully and those who become more disagreeable with each setting sun. But the most interesting thing about "getting older" in the town is that the long association of the people with each other enables them to picture one another in rôles at many age stations of life.

The attitude of the average mature male adult toward the effect of the passing of the years seems to be summed up to a large extent in the following statement of a native son of fifty-three:

You can't get away from the fact that you get older. A fellow doesn't like to admit to himself that he isn't what he used to be but he can't get away from it. I find that out best when I go hiking over the hills with my boys. Twenty years ago there were few men who could follow me; I seemed to be tireless. Now it wears me out to keep up with my fourteen-year-old boy. I long ago gave up the idea of keeping up with Gerald [oldest son], and gradually I have had to admit the superiority of the other boys, but it was only last Sunday that I found out that the fourteen-year-old was at least my equal. He is just a little twig of a fellow and I didn't admit to him that he had tired me so. Gosh! It sure does get your goat to see the years get the best of you, but when a fellow gets past forty-five he isn't what he used to be and there's no use for him to kid himself that he is. A day's work is a lot harder for him, believe me. He may know a little more, but that doesn't help much when he is earning his living with his physical strength. No, sir! I'm not what I used to be.

Perhaps every mature person in Mineville has seriously expressed himself in the cardinal phase of the foregoing quotation, "I'm not what I used to be"—everyone from the man who needs his physical strength in order to earn a living to the woman who wishes to keep her youthful figure and complexion.

Old age in Mineville gives to the individual a peculiar status unlike that which he would occupy in a large town. He often becomes conspicuous merely because of age. Duncan, who at the age of eighty-two still has the sprightly step of a man many years his junior and sufficient physical vigor to test the physical endurance of a young man, is the community's outstanding example of perennial youth. Vincent (age eighty-one years) is equally strong but is comparatively obscure because he was never more than a workman and there is nothing spectacular about him. He is well known among old-timers, however, and his vigor is shown by the fact that he can unload thirty-five tons of coal by hand from a box car in a day. Other examples of old age usually brought into conversations upon longevity in Mineville are: Nick Moe (age eighty-one years), a semi-active blacksmith; Atwood (age eighty-one), who drives his Ford thousands of miles each year; Mrs. Rhoades (age eighty-seven), who "still does her own work"; Mrs. Supalla (age ninety-one), who exists "because of a strong heart" when hardening of the arteries has reduced her to mental and physical helplessness; and, most sensational of all, "Miss Mary" (age seventy-six), the perennial flapper.

Duncan greatly resents the inroads of senility upon him. He complains that he has outlived his time and that he always dreaded being a relic. Also, he is irritated by the failing of his memory and hearing which, he feels, does much



to brand him as an old man despite his remarkable physical agility and endurance. The passing of his attraction for women disturbs him too. In order to compensate, in his own mind, he flatters himself that he is "still good enough to lick some of these young smart Alecs and would like to have a chance."

Unlike Duncan, Nick Moe is able to take his twilight years with grace. Despite having been in a much poorer state of physical preservation, he continued regularly to work in his blacksmith shop until late months when he became ill. Jacob French, another old-timer, called him a "cheap skate" for working when he had more money than he will ever use. Envious of Nick's financial competence, Jacob did not understand that Nick was working not for money but because he was happiest at work. The old people often reveal jealousy and envy for one another which is not borne toward them by younger people.

The largest group of old persons in the community is that made up of poor-farm residents and old-age pensioners. These persons are viewed together more because of common economic plight than because of group unity among themselves. The five old men at the poor farm, however, have a group consciousness, and various pensioners are pals with one another.

There are twenty-nine old-age pensioners in the county (twenty-two men and seven women) who receive ten or fifteen dollars per month in addition to an allowance for wood and the like. Some of these individuals were once prominent citizens in the community. Old Gulliver (age seventy-nine), who long resisted applying for a pension after he had need for it and who resented his status as a pensioner, said: "I made a lot of money in Crystal (clothing business) but it

came too easily for me to appreciate it. Now I sell clothing, press clothing, and had to go so far as to get an old-age pension to make ends meet."

Each year he became more disconsolate as he could feel his physical and mental powers gradually ebbing away. Pain from rheumatism and many other ailments acted as continual reminders of the gradual deterioration of his physical machine. "They should kill us when we are sixty," he said. He knew that he was too miserable even to appreciate the nursing given him by three or four indulgent friends. Occasionally he would say "Thank you" with an air of bitterness. But in the next moment he might say, as he did of one of his most devoted friends, "I wish that fellow would stay away from here." And at last he died thousands of miles from relatives, and was accompanied to the graveyard by a funeral train of but four automobiles, whereas had he died forty years earlier, during his days of prosperity, he would have had a large funeral.

Most of the old people seem to be discouraged by their real or imagined failing memories and by their ailing bodies. An elderly lady who has a most amazing amount of gossip at her tongue's end and who presents an external appearance of good health said:

I don't remember things like I used to. My memory used to be real good. Maybe I'll be able to tell you a few things that happened long ago. I have a terrible headache today. I'm miserable so much of the time that I guess I'll be passing on one of these days.

A man aged sixty-nine who illustrates the same tendency asserted:

My memory is getting bad. I won't be working very hard for a few days, so I guess I'll have time to talk to you. I've got the bleeding piles and I'm too weak to work much. I get all run down when I have an attack but I feel better when I begin to get my strength again.

"Doc" Day told me I wouldn't get over it until I have an operation but I don't think I'll have one. I've known several who had an operation like that and they lost control of their bowels. I think I'd rather bleed once in a while.

I like "Doc" Day. I think he's a pretty good doctor. When I lost control of my urine last summer I thought I would never get over it; I thought old age was getting the best of me like it did of my father. But "Doc" says to me, "Your trouble is mostly in your head. You forget about it and decide you are going to get all right and you'll be over it in no time." And I took his advice and it wasn't long before I was reasonable.

Mineville people are usually frank about their ages because they realize the capacity of small-town people to ferret out true ages of persons who have lived long in town. Even so, one elderly man of prominence was encountered who subtracted seven years from his actual age. But of all attempts to withhold knowledge of true age in the community none compares with that of "Miss Mary." For about twenty-five years she was "thirty-nine," and of late years she has become "forty-nine." In reality she is seventy-six years of age and had taught school in Mineville close to forty-five years at the time of her dismissal four years ago. The step of this perennial flapper is still that of an energetic woman of half her age, her clothes are in the latest styles and of the bright colors of youth, and her face has been thickly covered with cosmetics for so many years that people say: "We really don't know much about 'Miss Mary's' complexion. No one has seen her real face for thirty years and probably she hasn't seen it in the same length of time."

"Miss Mary" is always a good topic of conversation at all levels of the social hierarchy. "When I was in 'Miss Mary's' room," a man nearing sixty will say in relating an anecdote, and an eleven-year-old boy in the group can do the same.

Then there usually ensues speculation as to her age, some claiming that she has passed the eightieth milestone.

The oldest persons playing important parts in the community are "Judge" Burfee (age seventy-six), county attorney, and "Judge" Mayers (age seventy-five), justice of the peace. In a few months (1932) Burfee will have been an outstanding figure in Mineville for a half-century, and he bids fair to continue for a number of years. He takes the coming of old age with good-natured seriousness and jests that he supposes he "should have been dead long ago for the good of the community," because as long as he lives he will be running for county attorney. Mayers' is somewhat a parallel case in that the people probably will continue to elect him to the office of justice of peace until he lies under one of the tombstones which he and his wife have already purchased in anticipation of death.

#### DEATH

Death is an event of unusual moment in Mineville, not only to the immediate family of the deceased but to the whole community. The threatened passing-away of a person of even ordinary prominence throws the populace into a state of anxiety while his actual death causes genuine bereavement to several hundreds of persons. Few items of news are felt more deeply than "Did you hear that So-and-So died?"

Statistics of deaths in the community may be considered in four parts, viz., Mineville, "upper valley," "lower valley," and "former residents" who still live in the memories of the community.

The year 1929 was a normal year in respect to the death-rate. In that year the numbers of deaths were as shown in Table XX.

Numbers of deaths in the community may be secured from records, but, from these, computation of the death-rate would be very difficult because there are not accurate figures of the greatly varying population from year to year. The 1930 census accredits Mineville with a population of 1,410. Assuming that the population was the same in 1929, Mineville had a death-rate of 14.3 per 1,000 in that year.<sup>1</sup>

In a broader sense, the death-rate of the community must include all those dying in the county as well as deaths of

TABLE XX\*

Mineville . . . . .	20
Upper valley . . . . .	3
Lower valley . . . . .	11
Former residents . . . . .	12

\* These figures were compiled from a study of obituaries in the *Mineville Mail*.

former residents. Indeed, deaths in the upper and lower valleys often mean a great deal more to Minevillers than deaths of persons living in the town itself. And among the most deeply felt of deaths are those of former residents who, while out of the community geographically, have been living in that larger Mineville community, which is composed of all those who have established intimate personal contacts in the little town. These last are often men and women who passed their childhood and youth in Mineville and whom the town never ceases to claim as its "boys and girls."

A local practice which at first amuses strangers is that of advertising a death by means of pamphlets which are distributed to the various business houses of Main Street. This

<sup>1</sup> It seems that the Mineville death-rate is approximately the same as that for the country as a whole, which of late years has been about 13 per 1,000 and in 1929 was 11.9 per 1,000. Because of the small number of cases involved in Mineville, one death more or less would alter the rate so much that the deviation from the national rate in this case need not be taken seriously.



practice appears to be going out of vogue, but one is still likely to receive his first knowledge of some deaths from one of those black-margined pamphlets while he is awaiting his turn in the butcher shop. Only a few years ago the *Mineville Mail* never failed hastily to print these pamphlets and to have them distributed expeditiously, much as a special edition of a city daily is rushed upon the streets. They were a regular part of the ceremonial of dying, and were even tacked upon telephone poles.

Another community custom is that of sending flowers. The esteem in which the deceased was held may be well measured in terms of floral offerings. Even persons who rarely or never attend funerals send flowers. Several hundreds of dollars' worth of flowers which filled two large motor trucks constituted the floral offering to the druggist Coe. During an epidemic this custom works a hardship upon people because of the burden of an expenditure of from two and one-half to five dollars for each offering.

Information about bereavement is choice material for gossip. The people like to know how each member of the deceased's family "is taking it." "Mr. So-and-So is bearing up very well," they will say, "but you should see Mrs. So-and-So! She carries on something awful." On the other hand, some display of grief must be made lest it be rumored, "He doesn't seem to care much." Truly, it is difficult to think of anything more distasteful about the intimacy of small-town life than feeling obliged to refrain from an honest expression of grief lest detailed descriptions of one's behavior become a topic of conversation at dinner tables, bridge parties, etc., for several days.

Detailed news of the conduct of the deceased during his last illness is also in circulation. This includes such things as his appearance, his good or poor humor, his appreciation



for what is done for him, his writhing in moments of agony or delirium, and whether or not he viewed the end with courage and contentment.

Most of the people do not appear to be afraid of death. During 1929 and 1930 but three dying persons received notoriety for their fear, and strangely enough one was a butcher while another was the community's undertaker and coroner. The case of the undertaker is all the more unique when one considers the peculiar rôle he played in Mineville. For many years nearly every dead body which he had helped to prepare for burial was that of someone he had known in life.

A disposition not to think of death is noticeable in those who view it with fear. Mr. Lane (age forty-three) illustrates this tendency.

There was one time when I accepted that the end had come. I was in a rowboat on Geraldton Lake with Mrs. Everitts when a storm came up. The waves were six feet high and neither of us could swim very well. She would ask me if I thought we would make it to shore and I would assure her that we probably would—when I didn't think so. I never worked harder for a half-hour in my life. And when we got to shore she was so desperately afraid of the water that she piled into an automobile and went home without saying a word to her husband or anyone else.

I don't think of death. I drive it out of my head. I think about fishing trips instead.

The inevitability of death seems to be accepted gracefully by most of the persons interviewed. Some are resigned, as is Jack Cowal, miner (age fifty plus), who said upon the occasion of Dr. Paige's funeral:

Paige seems to be having a big funeral. I was going up but they say that the Masonic Hall is packed full and people have been turned away.

It doesn't make much difference whether a fellow dies now or later; it must come sometime.

Most of them receive solace from belief in a hereafter, but Harrison Edwards (age fifty plus), a mill-worker, is willing to take inevitable death without help of this faith—as long as he owes no money.

I never bothered about the hereafter. I notice that these people who believe most in the hereafter are the ones who hate most to die. Why, when they thought I was going to die from pneumonia they talked hereafter stuff to me and I told them I was sorry for only one thing and that was that I had to go before I had my debt to Duffman [grocer] paid.

John Kaler, the oldest resident, saw so much of death during pioneer days, has been so close to death himself so many times, has had so many friends die, and has observed the bodies of so many paupers that death worries him little. As a small boy he saw six men killed at one time and saw the Vigilantes hang two others.

As county commissioners we have to pay \$65 to bury a pauper. We have a paupers' graveyard. There must be about twelve or fifteen graves in it.

We have a Chinese section too.

People are buried in the Catholic, Masons, Odd Fellows, Woodmen of the World, or undifferentiated parts of the graveyard according to who buries them.

I have been commissioner for ten years and so I am used to seeing dead bodies. The coroner invites a commissioner to observe paupers' bodies, you know.

Death doesn't worry me. I can't see that it differs essentially from sleep. I've been so close to it so many times that I'm not bothered by it. Mother [wife], here, can tell you that I was as good as gone last year in Gold until I rallied when Harold and Walter [sons] each gave me a pint of blood.

Death doesn't worry me, but there's one thing I want to be sure of, and that is that when I am supposed to be dead I am really dead. I've instructed Mitchell [now deceased] to see to it that I am through when I die and he has promised to do it for me.

Pat McGuire, another old-timer, had charge of the graveyard. Being a true Catholic, death was a mere incident to him. "I sell the plots and get graves dug. There are the maps. Most of the graves can be located. I'll show you the book. Yes, I knew all of these people. There's old Hammond in 1896. You know who he was." As to the causes of deaths Mr. McGuire said:

You could get a pretty good idea of the causes of deaths from this record, only so many of them are not filled in. You can see plenty of cases of mill consumption and miner's consumption in the old days, but the records weren't kept like they might have been in the days of epidemics. And I'll tell you we sure had epidemics in those days. Why, the wife and I went to nine funerals in one week from Crystal at one time when the black pneumonia hit the place.

When Mr. Kaler and Mr. Dufbe came to town sixty years ago there were but three graves in the graveyard, now there are several thousands. Indeed, that barren-looking graveyard,<sup>1</sup> situated where nature has seen fit to grow nothing more beautiful than prairie grass, functions as the depository for the earthly remains of about five hundred friends, acquaintances, or persons known to the writer, who has just entered his thirtieth year. And so he can easily picture what it must mean to the old-timer who said: "I was out there not long ago and I bet I knew something about six out of

<sup>1</sup> In answer to a newcomer's statement that she "would hate to be buried in that barren and lonesome graveyard," an indigenous Mineville woman replied: "I don't find it that way. I find it to be the friendliest place in town. There are so many people I have known and loved lying peacefully about me when I am out there that I don't feel a bit lonely. Grass and flowers don't grow very well out there, and if you do take care of them the gophers eat them up, but anyway I like that graveyard and expect to be out there some day. Since we were kids I have liked to visit the graveyard, and so when this job put me in charge of it, I knew where most everybody was buried without studying the maps."

every ten of the people buried. Some of the people I hadn't thought of for about forty years, but it would all come back like a flash when I would see a name."

#### FUNERALS

The prominence of an individual is well brought out by the size of his funeral. This may be measured by the number of automobiles in the funeral train, which actual count reveals to be about twenty-five in the modal case. Assuming a conservative average of four persons per vehicle, over a hundred persons will be seen to be the usual number to accompany the Mineviller to his last resting place. But in the case of strangers, and even some persons fairly well known, there is often no more than the hearse, the pallbearers, and probably a straggling motor car or two. While, at the other extreme, men like the druggist Coe and the undertaker Mitchell had funeral trains over a mile in length.

Participation in a funeral train is a social event of import. This has been true from the earliest days of the town. Even within the last twenty years there existed a situation much like the following described by Walter Broger, an old-timer:

One custom which always impressed me was that which we had here when all business houses closed for a funeral, no matter who died. Each business house put out a flag and practically everyone went to the funeral—the status being determined by the means of conveyance. Those with the finer teams were next to the hearse, and there were many gradations between them and those riding horseback at the end of the procession. They always waited until the last shovelful of dirt had been cast and then there was a grand race for town. Many run-aways occurred at this time, and as soon as the people arrived in town they commenced to celebrate by drinking.

Places of business no longer close for every funeral, but there are still several funerals a year which merit this honor.

The flag custom, too, has been abandoned as has the drinking. And the people do not wait to see as much as the first shovelful of dirt thrown. Then, in place of a hierarchy of horsedrawn vehicles and horses there are corresponding degrees of automobile values from a costly Lincoln at the head to a rattling and balky Model-T Ford at the tail end.

Clara D. McDenry, county superintendent of schools, observes a changing attitude toward funerals. "A funeral was a different matter in those days from what it is now. Even an unknown man would have a fair-sized funeral. People felt that it was their duty to the dead to attend funerals." People still attend funerals as a matter of duty. "He would have gone to mine," they think, or else they may attend in order to avoid hurting the feelings of the bereaved. But community pressure is now largely absent except in the case of very close friends and relatives.

There are three factors affecting the size of the funeral train which are very interesting. One of these is that if the deceased was a person of prominence, citizens who knew him most casually take part in the procession, seemingly seizing upon such a funeral as an occasion to demonstrate their intimacy with him; a second is that there is a reluctance to parade along Main Street behind the funeral hearse of a friend of low repute; and a third is that weather conditions do much to discourage or encourage participation.

The most obvious index of interest in the dead is the size of his funeral train. In an ordinary case, however, at least twice as many people view the remains as accompany it to the graveyard. In this number are the morbidly curious and the "weepers"—habitual female funeral attenders who weep whether they were intimate with the deceased or not.

Officers of fraternal orders or clergymen, or both, tend to officiate at all except the lowliest of funerals. The attitudes



of those officiating are worth noting. One clergyman remarked: "I officiated at a funeral as a favor for Harold McLeod and then they began to come along so thick and fast that I decided to turn down all except for members of my church." Further, he disparages the value of "giving services for people who never embraced any faith. It doesn't do the individual any good." Another Mineville clergyman extended this last statement to include all people whether they have embraced a faith or not, when he said: "The intelligent minister makes his funeral services for the loved ones left behind and not for the dead for whom he pretends he has made them. I would prefer not to conduct services for most of the funerals, but what am I to do when they ask me?"

There is keen feeling about the part played by fraternal orders. Some relatives cherish a Masonic burial, Woodmen burial, etc., and officials of these organizations take precautions not to "bury a person who is not in good standing in the order." But when the deceased is of such social standing that there is honor connected with "conducting the services," much feeling arises in respect to the parts to be played by fraternal orders and churches which have claims. For instance, when Mrs. Paige and her son decided that Dr. Paige was not to have Masonic funeral services the Masons were up in arms. Some of them, friends of the doctor for forty years, thereupon refused to consider attending the funeral. After such feeling had been brewing for a day the relatives quietly announced that there had been a "misunderstanding." As a result, the doctor had a public funeral which taxed the capacity of the Masonic Hall to the limit (three hundred to four hundred persons), and in which two



Methodist ministers, one Presbyterian minister, and Masonic officers took part.

At the death of persons of ordinary prominence or more all information about them tends to circulate very rapidly. This fact was distinctly emphasized in the case of Mrs. Fairbank's death, at which time there was also a community fear of meningitis to accentuate the focusing of community attention upon death. A Gold undertaking establishment had charge of the deceased. This concern had sold funeral insurance to over one hundred families in Mineville and had strong critics in the local undertaker and his supporters. Owing to a misunderstanding, the Catholic priest was not at the Fairbanks' grave, creating, unexpectedly, a very embarrassing situation for the funeral director. Then, to make matters worse for the undertaking concern, its representative had casually made a remark which in a larger town would have passed virtually unnoticed but which under the circumstances cost him his job. The following gossip sheds light on the case:

MRS. NEVIN: It was due to a misunderstanding that the priest didn't give services at Cal Fairbank's wife's funeral. Cal knows now but he was pretty angry for a while.

I heard he was angry enough to quit the church.

Cal thought the priest was going to find his own ride out to the cemetery and the priest thought Cal was coming after him.

MRS. MERTON [a Catholic]: The priest announced in church that anyone who said he couldn't or wouldn't give services at the grave was lying because a priest can never refuse a call to God. He said it was all due to a misunderstanding.

MRS. NEVIN: People surely were mad because he wasn't at the grave. You should have heard Mrs. Wassman rave—and she is supposed to be a good Catholic.

Did you know that the undertaker got fired who said he wouldn't be surprised if Mrs. Fairbank had a touch of meningitis?

Well, he did. Mrs. Bawden told me all about it. She was the one to whom he made the remark. Everything probably would have been all right if his remark had been circulated over town as he actually made it. The trouble was that everyone kept adding a little until it became a long and ghastly story, and the undertaker was given as authority for the whole thing.

A representative of the Hasdale Mortuary came over from Gold and interviewed Mrs. Bawden and other women. And the poor young fellow lost his job. It was too bad because it was his first job and he had just returned from Chicago where he had learned the business.

#### THE TRAGEDY OF DEATH

"Life is a sad thing. Sadness comes to everyone if he lives long enough." So spoke Henry Broger, a native son who had lost his wife and a sixteen-year-old daughter. But in Mineville the milder forms of sadness through death come often, for there is a death on an average of more than once per fortnight—usually the passing of someone everyone in town knows.

The frequency and seriousness with which death comes into the life of a Mineviller may be shown by a study of obituaries in the *Mineville Mail*—obituaries being among the front-page feature articles of the paper. A random period from June 6, 1930, to August 8, 1930, may be selected. On June 6 there was the lengthy obituary of the grade-school principal who had been killed in a railroad-crossing accident in a neighboring town. Mineville was fairly stunned at the news, and for months the principal's wife said that the sound or whistle of a railroad locomotive almost caused her to swoon. But only a year later she herself was dead from heart failure, leaving two small children.

No last tributes to the dead appeared in the June 13 issue of the paper, but there were two in that of June 19. One was that to a resident for forty years who had died from

a combination of miner's consumption and pneumonia; the other was to a much-beloved woman, thirty-six years of age, who had lived all of her life in Mineville and had succumbed to tuberculosis. Two weeks followed in which the *Mail* had no obituaries, and then on July 11 those of two former residents appeared. A former Mineville restaurant proprietor had died from injuries received in an automobile wreck; and a man who was born in Mineville during pioneer days had died from gas inhaled in a mine accident. The next week's issue contained three last tributes. An old prospector had succumbed to cancer of the stomach, an elderly widow from dropsy, and a fourteen-year-old boy from injuries received in the Mineville Fourth of July Wild West celebration. On July 25 the editor had no deaths to list, but the following week he had an opportunity to feature the deaths of two old residents: those of the janitor of the high school, who had died from miner's consumption, and of a man who now and then worked as a blacksmith, who had died of pneumonia.

None of these persons was in the prominent-citizen class, but all except two had been known to practically everyone in town for many years. In each case the tragedy, if any, was well known to the community. Rather arbitrarily we may mention three of them in some detail: the fourteen-year-old boy, the janitor, and the blacksmith.

"Whiskey Bill" Tomich had been a troublesome pupil in the grade school. He had been, in fact, the beloved bad boy of the town. As a child of four years his unique "hard-boiled" behavior had made him as well known as a prominent citizen. When he was injured as a bucking horse cast its rider upon him at a rodeo which the fire brigade was sponsoring in order to raise funds, public sympathy was

aroused for him and for his widowed mother. Mineville followed his condition day by day as the nation follows that of a stricken president. It was out of such a dramatic situation that "Whiskey Bill," the fourteen-year-old son of a Serbian immigrant woman, was honored with a funeral comparable in size with those of Mineville's leading citizens. The whole town turned out!

Then there was the case of George Conger who for eighteen years had been janitor of the high school. He was known affectionately by hundreds of young people as "Georgie," and when his spark of life was no more they were genuinely sad. Retiring with enough money to provide him a comfortable period of old age, he lived only one year in ailing health before the end came. Although he worked in mines only part of the time, his fondest hopes and dreams were centered about his mine by a beautiful mountain lake which he owned and had stocked with fish.

Barney Rickett was a blacksmith who had been good-natured but somewhat improvident. He was survived by a wife and six minor children and left neither money nor property. "Another case for the county to take care of," the people said when informed of Barney's death. After trying desperately for a year to maintain a home on the county widowed mothers' pension allowance, his widow had her children taken to a state orphans' asylum.

The two months' list of deaths in Mineville just presented suggests that its people have more reminders of the threat of death than does the average city dweller. Excepting the few unknown dead, each one of the several thousands of graves in the graveyard has meant sorrow to some residents, while most of them have caused sadness to several hundreds of the people and have acted as reminders of death to the

rest. Each Memorial Day finds from twenty-five to fifty more of the residents' friends or acquaintances interred in the desolate graveyard, where, as the speaker of the day, in 1930, "Judge" Burfee, who had participated in the drama for nearly fifty years, said:

As we stand out here surrounded by the graves of those we have known so well the thought comes that it will not be long until we, too, are beside them under six feet of ground, that it will not be long until we, too, are but memories. But we must live on and try as best we can to become good memories—whatever that may mean in terms of eternity. No one knows which of us will be out here under the earth when these services are held next year.

After the seventy-six-year-old judge had spoken these words, a salute was fired by local war veterans, and the band played. A tragic figure in the band was seventy-three-year-old John Kaler, whose once-powerful physique was no longer able to support his huge sousaphone. For sixty years he had been a resident of the community, and for fifty-three years a member of the Mineville band. Now, a son, with physical vigor such as he once had, helped him to support the sousaphone lest the breeze topple him over. This man had seen the graveyard grow from three graves to its present size. The ring of "Judge" Burfee's words must have been replete with meaning for him of whom people said as the band played: "Mr. Kaler probably won't be in that band next year. The others will be playing music at his grave as a special honor then."

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE CHANGING TOWN

#### MODERN MECHANICAL INVENTIONS AND COMMUNITY CHANGE

*The railway.*—Mineville has had railway and telegraph connections since 1887. It is but twenty-eight miles from two transcontinental railways: the Northern Pacific; and the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific. "The Milwaukee" (1912) was the first extensively electrified railroad in the United States and has still the longest stretch of electrification. Many a smug easterner had his initial astonishments at the marvelous power, speed, cleanliness, and quietness of the electric locomotive years after the Mineviller had grown to take it for granted.

*The automobile.*—Mineville once had five blacksmith shops. Two or three men worked in each of them. From morning until night the ring of the anvil echoed along Main Street. But nowadays all that remains of that once prosperous business is done by two old men who are relics from the past. One of these men is sixty-nine years of age and works strenuously part of the time on four days each week; the other is eighty-one and keeps his shop open primarily because he feels most at home near the anvil over which he toiled for so many years, and because the shop is an excellent place for him to visit with his old cronies. Such is one change wrought by the automobile in Mineville. Another is the enforced idleness of old teamsters who are unable to adapt themselves to other lines of work since their own has reached the vanishing-point with the advent of the motor truck. On



the physical side, the passing of the horse has caused the presence of many old barns and stables which are never used or else are rather awkwardly transformed into garages. Gradually, however, these unsightly blemishes to the landscape are being removed by fire or torn down, and the family car is being given more dignified and modern quarters.

The two busy livery stables of the Main Street of former days have been replaced by strongly competing garages. The community enjoys watching one of the competitors vigorously expound upon the extraordinary qualities of General Motors automobiles while the other insists that the sun rises and sets in the Ford. Although these dealers have the cars most in demand—the Chevrolet and the Ford—enthusiasts for almost every make of car may be found in the community. Arguments and discussions on the merits and demerits of automobiles have supplanted and exceeded that preoccupation with horses which was characteristic of the past. From a very lucrative business the horse business has declined until the leading dealer, who sold several thousands of horses each year prior to 1912, has placed on the eastern market an average of but 250 for the last seven years, and for these the prices were generally very low—from five to twenty dollars apiece.<sup>1</sup>

A horse is a more common sight in the residence districts of Chicago than on Main Street. In 1928 there were registered, in Crystal County, 555 automobiles. Meanwhile the number has increased until there is in excess of one car for each five persons in the county. Thus most of the families have automobiles and, considering the economic level of the people, it is not surprising that purchasing of these vehicles on the instalment plan is the rule. This works a hardship

<sup>1</sup> The buyer pays the freight.

upon Main Street merchants. For when persons are thrown out of work or for other reasons are tightly pressed financially, they must meet payments on their automobiles even though the grocer and butcher bills remain unpaid for months. A Main Street merchant complained:

See that new car? Well, that fat guy is buying it on the instalment plan. He owes me a big bill but now I may never be paid. Automobiles are hell on a business man. People can't pay their bills while they are buying a car, and as soon as they get a car they go to Gold and buy, that is, when they have the money to pay cash. The automobile sure does take money out of town. This town used to be lots livelier when people stayed in town during the evenings and spent their recreation money here.

Just look at the truck gardeners and vendors of farm products who come in here from a hundred miles away and undersell the grocery stores. And do you know that Smith is almost being driven out of business by the cleaning and pressing outfit that sends that truck in here each week from Glenview and goes from house to house and gathers up all the business? Those birds can have lower prices because they have little overhead expense.

Without good roads, of course, this far-distant competition would not succeed. But it was the automobilist who caused the improvement of roads. His constant demand for better and better roads is a never ending irritation to the county commissioners and results in one of the greatest expenses of the county.

Since the first coming of the daily newspaper, nothing has broken down Mineville's isolation as has the automobile. Connection with most of the principal towns in the region is maintained by daily bus service, and a freight truck makes daily deliveries to and from Gold and Smelters. Formerly, strangers in Mineville were relatively rare and excursions to other towns were matters of especial comment. Now numerous traveling men and tourists are seen every day and Mine-

villers go to neighboring towns to satisfy the most trivial whim. On the other hand, the automobile has had some influence in making Minevillers satisfied with their town. For when they realize that they are not marooned and can leave the town behind at will, they have less cause to complain. One woman said, "You don't have any more anywhere else than you have here when you have a radio and a car."

Since the coming of the first horseless carriage to Mineville a quarter of a century ago the number of residents who have been killed in automobile accidents does not yet equal the number of fingers on one hand. The great majority of automobile accidents occur either on country highways, where there is a tendency to speed; or on winding mountain roads, which at best are somewhat hazardous for motorists. Strangers who do not know the many turns and other peculiarities of the roads are especially prone to have mishaps.

*The motion picture.*—Mineville has excellent "talkies." The pictures shown are the very best. The fact that they come to town a few months after their "first nights" in the larger cities of the country does not imply that Minevillers are behind the times. In so far as a picture is of moment it is like Shakespeare's plays and tends to be as valuable a few months later as upon its first appearance. This, of course, may not hold for some of the news reels.

Attendance at the theater is difficult to measure in a simple numerical statement since it is extremely variable. On one night it may be fifteen or twenty and on another five hundred. And there is no apparent reason for assuming that the effect of the movies upon Minevillers is different from that upon people the country over, with the exception that they bring to the residents of any small town a steady flow of insight into life in a large city since so many pictures have

their settings in that background. For example, the writer had not been a passenger on a street car from his sixth to his nineteenth year, and yet during his first ride at the latter age he quite startled himself by automatically reaching for a strap when the car swerved to one side. He had imaginatively played the rôles of city people so often in the movies of little Mineville that he unconsciously acted as they would act in that situation.

*The radio.*—Actual count shows that 40 per cent of the families in Mineville have radios, and that these are distributed quite uniformly over the entire community. As for the function of this wide distribution, we can only say that the people are so well standardized that the radio is for them what it is for most of the population of the United States: mainly a musical instrument, a means of light entertainment, and an advertising medium. No program is more welcome than the type presented by "Amos 'n' Andy." In fact, wherever one walks in Mineville at the proper time of the evening he is likely to hear the familiar beginning and ending strains of "Amos 'n' Andy's" program from a radio within a home. Serious programs are appreciated, but preferably in small doses.

When there is "nothing else to do" people turn on the radio, and quite unintentionally they often find themselves interested in a serious lecture. This sometimes loud instrument helps to make the home fires attractive when, otherwise, members of the family would be scattered to various places in and out of town. It offers a cheap form of entertainment and one that is providing serious competition to the local theater, the churches, and many evening gatherings. A frequent excuse for absence from any evening gathering is: "I was lying down and listening to the radio.

There was a peach of a program. I just couldn't get myself to clean up and go out into the cold when I was so comfortable." If the automobile actually is breaking down the family by increasing the mobility of its members and causing them to spend little time at home, it would seem that the radio is an effective antidote.

*The airplane.*—The airplane has not yet had much influence in Mineville. An occasional plane passes over the town, and on the Fourth of July of 1929 and of 1930 a pilot gave residents their first aerial view of their town and its environs.

To date, perhaps the chief influence of the airplane in Mineville has been that upon boys and young men. Grade-school boys delight in making model planes, and many of them frankly admit that they intend to be aviators. A number of the young men also aspire to become aviators, but most of them are modest enough to think rather of being airplane mechanics. Only a few days after the close of school a recent graduate (1931) of the high school became a student flyer at an aircraft school in Gold. Already two young Minevillers have joined the air division of the United States military forces and have returned home disillusioned.

*The telephone.*—Prior to 1910 the telephone was confined mainly to business houses. Between 1910 and 1913 a wave of private installations took place, and by 1916 the town had about one hundred and eighty telephones—a number which expanded to about two hundred in 1919 and has remained at approximately that figure. Besides the business telephones, roughly one-half of the families have them. With an average of five hundred "calls" per day, the operator is kept busy and communications are almost constantly going on over the network of telephone lines during ordinary waking



hours. Also, there are from twenty-five to forty long-distance calls per day—mostly to larger cities of the surrounding region.

*The electric light.*—The electric light was first introduced into the community in the early nineties. It encountered considerable resistance, and even today there are a number of houses in town which do not have electric lights. From time to time the installation man has the unpleasant job of crawling in the accumulated dust of forty years when an old-timer decides to have "lights put in."

*The refrigerator.*—The refrigerator, says an old butcher, has greatly curtailed the amount of meat consumed in the community because people do not waste excess meat as was formerly the case. Approximately one-third of the homes have refrigerators, about one out of six of which is electric. The twenty homes which have electrical refrigeration have a luxury since refrigeration is needed only three months of the year.

*Heating.*—Roughly, one Mineville home in twenty has a furnace. When a need is felt for new heating equipment, an ornate and expensive stove is purchased instead of a furnace because most of the homes do not have basements large enough to contain furnaces. Even the wood stove still has a stronghold although coal is gradually driving it out.

*The bathtub and toilet fixtures.*—The first bathtub in Mineville, in the early eighties, was the "talk of the town." Now, nearly fifty years later, a study of the records of the city water collector shows that of 357 households which pay water rent, 153, or about 40 per cent, have the advantage of a bathtub. Besides these, there are 7 hotels, lodging-houses, or apartments in which bathtubs are installed.

The households that still have unsanitary outhouses are,



of course, practically identical with those which do not have bathtubs. All of this, however, is not due to the backwardness of the people. In fact, those families having bathtubs and modern water toilet fixtures are restricted almost entirely to the parts of town which have the advantage of sewer connections. People in other parts of town wish sewer connections but do not have them because the expense has been prohibitive, owing to the wide scatter of the houses and the necessity for a long drainage canal in one case in which about forty homes are involved. A sewer-extension program entered upon in 1931 will remedy the situation partly, at least.

The frequency of bathing varies from twice daily to once each season. This great difference is usually not reflected in external appearances, however. The "Saturday-night bath" is in vogue in many of the homes, and the men in the employ of the Salmon Mining Company present the appearance of being quite clean. These men become very dirty at work but are able to take a shower bath every day, owing to the excellent shower-bath facilities provided by that Company. But perhaps the best indication that the people value cleanliness is the wide distribution of electric washing machines and the fact that the town is white with huge family washings every Monday. No woman wants "it to get all over town that she doesn't keep her kids clean."

The shortage of bathtubs in homes is said to exercise an influence upon the birth-rate. Note the following assertion of a young married man:

I like this town more than I could ever like another because I have lived here all my life excepting the last few years. But the old town is surely behind the times in some ways. Take the matter of bathtubs, for instance. The houses were built before the time when bathtubs

were common and the people don't have enough faith in the town to invest in bathtubs. A good bathroom would cost almost as much as a lot of the houses.

And I can tell you one thing, a lot of people wouldn't have so many kids if they had bathtubs. There's Campman with five kids already. And there's Turcott who has nine. I know for a fact that Campman wouldn't have so many if it were more convenient to be careful. And Turcott will tell you that they had no chance to keep clean living in such houses. And before Turcott came here he lived in lumber camps and places worse than this. Believe me, poor people are supposed to be having large families on account of ignorance when they don't have a chance to take what precautions they know how to take. A bathtub with running warm water makes a big difference.

*The washing machine.*—There are very few families that do not have a washing machine of some sort if they do their own washing. The manager of the electric-light company was able to count from memory one hundred and eighteen families that have electric washing machines and says he "bets there are two hundred." Very few of the hand- or water-driven varieties are still in use, and it is not unusual to see an expensive electric washing machine in a home which bears few other "modern" household conveniences than running water and electric lights.

Mechanical washing in Mineville does not end in the home. Long ago the establishment of a modern steam laundry caused the exodus of the local Chinese colony which depended to a large extent upon hand laundering.

*Other electrical devices in the home.*—The manager of the local electrical company says that he does not know of a woman with electric lights in her home who has no curling iron. Next in order of frequency, he says, are the electric iron, toaster, vacuum cleaner, percolator, hot plate, sewing

machine, and, last of all, three electric stoves and two man-gles.<sup>1</sup>

*Some modern inventions in business and industry.*—The offices of Main Street and the courthouse have the latest office equipment, including posting machines, electric calculating machines, mimeographs, steel filing cabinets, check writers, and the like. In the printshop is to be found a Mergenthaler linotype machine which cost \$8,500. The thoroughly modern butcher shop is in a new building, and has several thousands of dollars invested in mechanical meat-slicers, enameled counters for show cases, and the latest electrical refrigeration. Recently the baker installed a new \$2,000 electric oven with other equipment to match. For several years the three soda fountains have had electrical refrigeration. Highly refined and expensive apparatus is had in the chemical laboratories, some of which excites the interest of curious city visitors. The dentist and the physician also have expensive and up-to-date appliances, such as an X-ray machine and a fluoroscope. The garage tools and machinery are like those conventional everywhere. Indeed, even the aged blacksmith has an electric hammer and other

<sup>1</sup> The writer started to survey the community in order to secure among many other things the precise number of modern household devices in each home. After having visited twenty-six homes he abandoned the procedure. The end did not seem to justify the means. People became suspicious that he was prying into their private affairs when he asked so many questions, and privacy is a sensitive topic in a small town where so many forces contrive to break it down. His outstanding impression of the homes visited was the wide differences in conveniences had by families with the same income. Some had practically everything on his list while others had no more than electric lights, curling iron, and running water. A stranger who could have assured people that he had no ulterior motive probably would have had no trouble, and the women would not have been embarrassed to admit that they were without this and without that convenience.

electrical devices to substitute for the sweat of his brow. And while some of the poorer farms are not well equipped, the leading farmers of the district have the best of modern machinery.

The mines and mills are the largest consumers of electrical current in the community. Huge, intricate, and costly steam hoists have been replaced by much smaller, less complex, and comparatively inexpensive electric hoists for the raising of ore from far beneath the surface of the earth. Also, water, which is one of the greatest obstacles in the deep mines, is pumped by means of electrically driven pumps; and drills which pierce deep into the hardest of rock receive their original motive force from electric current.

The presence of extensive mining operations in the Mineville of today is based essentially upon two inventions: the dry battery and the magnetic separator. Without the dry battery in which most of the local manganese is used, the manganese mines would be of little commercial value aside from periods of national emergency when foreign ore is not available for the hardening of steel and for various chemical uses. Similarly, without the magnetic separator which consists of a series of very powerful magnets which attract the rich ore while the poorer goes off as waste, a product of commercial grade would not be had.

Oil flotation, a method of treating ore at a very low cost, will bring prosperity to Mineville if the market price of silver ever returns to its average level for the last fifty years. A flotation mill has already been constructed. It was operated successfully at the 1930 low price of silver, the lowest in history—until the 1931 slump.

This inventory of modern mechanical inventions in Mineville must be taken as suggestive and not as complete. For

instance, anyone with a knowledge of chemistry and mechanics will know that mention of such things as oil flotation, the magnetic separator, and modern farm machinery involves literally thousands of modern inventions. But cursory as is this list, it brings out a most important point for the purposes of this study: That a surprisingly wide range of the elements of modern material progress are encompassed by the drab small town of Mineville; that, while conspicuous cultural lags are manifest here and there, they are rapidly being remedied and do not seriously interfere with the progressive temper of the community as a whole—in terms of material change.

#### THE MECHANISM OF SOCIAL CHANGE

The rather imposing array of modern mechanical inventions in local industry is largely an upshot of the pursuit of profits. The mining engineer who has sufficient technical knowledge to take advantage of the very latest elements of progress in chemistry, mechanics, geology, mineralogy, and business is able to show the greatest margin of profits to stockholders. Upon the profit he is able to show depends his security in his job, his chance for advancement, his status in his profession, and the size of his bonus at the end of the year. Consequently, the leaders in Mineville's mining industry are exceedingly, and, in the eyes of the community, notoriously efficient. "They squeeze every penny," the workers say, "and work their heads off trying to find new ways to earn more money for eastern stockholders." So it is not surprising that these experts are quick to utilize any new elements of progress in the many fields related to the mining industry which have local application.

Similarly, the competition of the other professional men,



the business men, and the farmers with one another and with the outside world makes improvement for them a matter of business expediency. The only physician and the only dentist never know when an outsider may decide to "set up an office" in town; and if they are not able to give service which compares favorably with that to be had elsewhere, they are likely to find themselves specializing on emergency and charity cases. If one Main Street merchant does not keep his stock up to the minute, the people go to another who does. And if the merchant has no local competitor or if his competitor is without the desired article, the people resort to motor trips to Gold business houses or to the mail-order catalogue. Even the only butcher and the only baker do not rest at ease with a feeling of monopoly. Both ward off the intrusion of local competition by having advantage of equipment representing investments so great that for it to be duplicated by a rival would be unprofitable unless nearly all the business in town could be secured—and this is an improbability. The people complain about the high price of meat and predict that "someone will be starting a butcher shop one of these days," but they rarely suggest the likelihood of a new bakery. As it is, the baker has a hard struggle because of the strong competition offered by city baking firms who ship their products daily to local grocers.

On every hand Mineville is caught in the great web of economic and other standardizing agencies of the state and nation. The dentist, physician, engineer, lawyer, pharmacist, or teacher of Mineville has graduated from a standard college or at least fulfilled the requirements for a state license. State and national educational associations set the standards for the schools; the books of the city and county offices must be passed by a state inspector; farmers have



their cattle inspected by a state cattle inspector and display them at the state fair; working conditions in mines and mills are approved by the state mine and mill inspector; buildings are regularly condemned by the state fire marshal; hunting and fishing are regulated by the state fish and game warden; the income-tax collector makes his yearly trip to town, etc. And all the while Mineville is exposed to the same national advertising campaigns as are city dwellers—on billboards, in periodicals, in the movies, over the radio, and through traveling salesmen.

Besides the community progress brought about by the local pursuit of profits and that progress actually forced upon Mineville by outside economic, political, and other agencies, there is also that arising from organized local community co-operation. But even here we find that the local leaders who have the greatest potential capacity to bring about community betterment are those who also lead in the economic life, especially if these men have the added advantage of personal popularity. The people are afraid frankly to refuse to assist a leader in the mining industry when he gets behind some cause. It has so happened, however, that a very large part of the leaders in Mineville's mining activities have not thoroughly merged with the community. These men have not "high-hatted" the rank and file of the people but they have tended to restrict their leadership to economic activities and to political activities closely related therewith. To others with less prestige they have left the remaining problems of bringing about ameliorative social change. All too often they have played a rôle not unlike that of mining engineers in an African jungle who direct native workers whom they like well enough but in the success of whose community life they take no interest unless the

matter of profits appears to be affected. In their defense, however, some of these men have perhaps justly said that they were "too busy" or have had "enough things to worry about" in their work.

Lack of community pride is characteristic of all except a mere handful of the people. Leaders agree that "it is hard to get the people to pull together and always was." The most devoted and one of the most successful of the community's leaders for over a quarter of a century said:

The people of this town don't mind if things are done but they want the other fellow to do it. Their attitude has always been to "let George do it." The lucky thing has been that somehow there has always seemed to be a George who was fool enough to do it.

One of the strongest factors in this woman's ability to lead was, as people generally put it, "No one has the nerve to refuse her unless he has an honest-to-goodness excuse because she tries so hard to do what is best for the community." As a matter of fact, a large part of what usually passes for spontaneous "co-operation" for community betterment is enforced by external factors. Business men and others contribute financially and give their time to civic enterprises because of ends other than the end of the co-operation. Neither the business man nor the ordinary citizen cares to hazard his success and peace of mind by gaining a reputation as a "tightwad." A way of making certain that pressure in this direction will be sufficiently strong is that of circulating a petition stating the amounts contributed by various persons and ending by printing the list in the *Mineville Mail*. And if a leading citizen's name is frequently absent from these lists or if his amount contributed is small, the customary retort is "Oh, that tightwad! What would you expect of him?" The ways of getting one's money in a

city are many, but at least this form of extortion is not so noticeable—and extortion it is for the Main Street business man who has no other alternative than to contribute. Indeed, when money is needed for any civic affair the habitual first thought in the community is to “take up a collection among the business men and then canvass the town if you haven’t enough.” As one business man said:

Every time you turn around somebody wants you to contribute to something. Everybody that comes around acts as if he has the only cause you have to support. Sometimes the money goes out of town and sometimes it stays at home, but when Mineville people do the soliciting it’s hard to turn them down. There are so many ways of giving your money away that you have to draw the line somewhere and fail some good causes. As for me, it takes the fun out of giving and helping because people never seem to think I’ve done enough.

With mingled feelings of willingness and reluctance the people co-operate for community betterment. Silently they force one another to lend assistance to many causes, and a disproportionate part of the burden is thrown upon perhaps a tenth of the people who are prominent enough so that they would suffer seriously in status by failing to conform.

This is not to say that external pressure to co-operation is necessarily unwholesome, but only to suggest its strong influence in a small town. How much co-operation would result without external pressure, of course, we cannot say. At any rate, Mineville illustrates well the diminishing importance of local solidarity as a community ceases to be isolated. To a surprising extent the town functions as a group of more or less discrete individuals or small groups which pursue their own ends. These loosely knit persons and groups tend to have roughly the same ideals and values partly because of interaction with one another but largely

as a result of their being controlled by response to a common progressive outside world. And one wonders if such response to the progress of the world as a whole may not compensate for the lack of internal solidarity in many communities. For, to the extent that they react to that larger whole, the individuals receive common definition of ends and values quite apart from interaction with one another. And they may come to demand these ends and values as individuals or small groups and not as members of a unified local community.

It is difficult to say to what extent outside leadership acts first upon local leaders to be later emanated from them to the rank and file, and the extent to which it acts directly upon the population as a whole. But the probabilities seem to be that most of the influence is direct through common exposure to the same editors of city daily papers, magazines, advertising, radio programs, movies, etc. Change occasioned by such agencies is much more likely to take place without opposition than that formally sponsored by local leaders, because personal prejudice in favor of or against the sponsor has comparatively little effect. It follows, then, that not only the acknowledged leaders but every resident is an agent of social change, for each has some originality of reaction toward the local situation and each, tending to be in contact with the outside world, is likely to absorb some elements therefrom earlier than the rest of the townsfolk.

A most important factor in encouraging progressive change is the prestige gained by copying what is done in larger centers. The people like to feel that they are quite on a par with city folks in respect to being up-to-date. What "they are doing" or "are wearing" in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles sets the standard for what shall be done in

Mineville. As fast as automobiles, railways, and the radio can operate, the little town is brought the latest mechanical devices, books, papers, song hits, and wisecracks. Bobbed hair and short skirts, although they met resistance, became general with greater rapidity than in many large cities since the village flappers refuse to be "slow" and old-fashioned. Once a new idea or material object is introduced into the community, its rapid diffusion is assured to no small degree because not to be in possession of "the latest" is to suffer in personal contrast with other townsfolk—all of whom tend to follow standards set by the larger cities.

Intimacy and the small size of the town have important bearings upon its processes of social change. Because in so stable and diminutive a milieu the residents tend to be intermarried, to be friends or enemies, and in other respects to be organized on a personal basis, stubborn and unwarranted resistance to social change often occurs. To no small extent action prejudicial or contrary to the wishes of an individual or group causes personal alignments on various sides of a question. And so by the personal power of a conservative group, or leader, or by the unwillingness of the sponsors of progress to arouse personal antagonisms by vigorously asserting their stand, advance is often held in abeyance and made difficult. It is a common occurrence for a progressive leader to lament:

The people in this town are disgusting. It isn't that they don't know a good thing when they see it. The trouble is that they are afraid they might hurt somebody's feelings by saying what they think. They will say what they think behind the other fellow's back but you can't get them to do it in an open meeting where the statements would do some good.

Yet gossip is so efficient that in a whispering or semi-whispering manner public opinion is formed and re-formed with



considerable rapidity, and the alert temper of the people brings a demand for progressive action without a great deal of delay, in most cases.

The relation of intimacy to social change may again be noted in the phenomena that arose in connection with the introduction of smoking by women into the community. It is conceded that a large part of the women and girls of the town smoke, and yet such smoking in public places or at parties is suppressed by social pressure. Why is this? It is not necessarily because a larger proportion of Mineville people than city people object to smoking by women, but merely that those who disapprove function significantly in the woman's life and she knows them well enough to know whether or not they disapprove. This vivid awareness of the other fellow's opinion and the fact that she is obliged constantly to meet and have dealings with him causes her to be more comfortable in inhibiting her desire to smoke under certain public circumstances.

From this, however, the conclusion should not be drawn that the people are never frank in behavior and in expressing their opinions. As a matter of fact, most of them are in little danger of developing psychoses from inhibitions. Women smoke very much as they please at home, and the people as a whole seem to express the great majority of their opinions<sup>1</sup> to someone in town sooner or later. Indeed, "talking behind the other fellow's back" is conspicuous, is done by all, and is a manifestation of the indirect way in which, to a large extent, intimacy causes the residents to operate in bringing about or inhibiting change.

But by far most social changes in the community take place with little or no opposition. There is, in fact, a general

<sup>1</sup> The opinions they want to express.



demand for change, for improvement, even though the people co-operate poorly toward that end. Conflict arises far more often in respect to the manner in which change shall take place than in regard to whether or not it shall take place. The out-and-out conservative is not a person of high repute in Mineville. Not to be liberal is to be branded an "old fossil," an "old fogy," or a "mossback," and the people are not hesitant in thus characterizing one another—behind one another's backs usually. Thus the personal stigma of being behind the times causes residents to be alert to new things.

On the whole, Mineville's leaders are very progressive. This applies not only to the twenty college graduates and numerous others who have had normal-school or some college training, but to most persons who exercise leadership. When one of them appears to be very conservative, it will usually be found that an eddy in his personality is expressing itself and that in most respects he is quite liberal. An instance is had in the case of the lady who dominates the Presbyterian church. On matters in general she is progressive, and yet she is opposed to the consolidation of the three Protestant churches unless the "little building" with which she has been deeply identified for forty years becomes the one remaining Protestant house of worship. The thought of turning it into a gymnasium violates something that is sacred to her, and so she says, "You can turn it into a gymnasium after I die." And there are leading members of the other Protestant churches who feel likewise about their "little buildings."

But relative to the total amount of occasion for change, little of community-wide consequence appears to be inhibited by such excessive sentiment for material objects. Al-

though long identification with particular institutions creates intense sentiment for them, that sentiment is not primarily directed toward keeping the institutions as they are but rather upon improving them. Even residents who are uneducated and have never lived elsewhere tend to be progressive. Much of this probably is due to the general dissatisfaction with the town which is a community habit and which makes changes welcomed and demanded by all. The people are ever rebelling against the limitations of the small-town milieu. Their attitude as often expressed is: "At best we haven't much in this damned town. We might as well do the best we can." But after admitting thus that change is needed, they are prone to want the other fellow to bring it about and to criticize him and show little appreciation for what he does.

The lack of appreciation shown to those who gratuitously assume responsibilities discourages some of the ablest potential leaders from taking part in the direction of community affairs. They say, "Somebody else can have the grief because it is all work and no glory." Many a movement has indifferent success, fails, or is never started because such people do not "get behind it," or it is taken for granted that they will not. Still the town progresses. With all the publicity attached to the events of the town, its leaders, after all, have some executive privacy. For instance, most of the largest changes in the schools arouse little or no comment—and this includes changes such as the installation of a stoker, an expensive fire-alarm system, and fire escapes during the present year in the grade school, in addition to the installation of a stoker in the high school. The fact of the matter is that many important changes are regarded with indifference, whereas the personal texture of the community encourages others not so important to be inhibited or made unpleasant

if they happen to "step on someone's toes—these latter instances often arising at the most unexpected places. But Mineville's leaders understand well the quirks of their little public. So when they cannot evade or conceal matters which are likely to arouse personal issues, they usually have sufficient courage to stand the consequences, for if they take an unprogressive course, far more abuse will be heaped upon them in the long run than accrues from accepting present consequences of justified action.

The utter unreasonableness of some resistances to change in Mineville might easily cause anyone who generalized upon a few such instances to assume that the town is conservative. But a picture such as has been presented in this study, however roughly, shows no cause for assuming that the town as a whole lags seriously behind the general march of progress. Although Minevillers do not have elevators, skyscrapers, street cars, art museums, grand opera, or gang warfare, their lives do not seem to differ essentially from those of city residents of their economic stations.

Ready access to a much larger center of population tends to make the town function in many respects as a suburb. In fact, a surprising number of the people have lived at least several years in a large city. Their rebellion against the limitations of the small-town milieu is not so much that they do not have substantially the advantages of a city but rather that some few of these advantages are had inconveniently and at the expense of a long motor trip, a long-distance telephone call, or the time required for a communication by mail. Reaction against this difficulty is aggravated by the stresses and strains of intimacy and causes residents to imagine that city people of their economic classes do a great many more things, when, as a matter of fact, the most sig-

nificant difference lies in the fact that the city person does not have the "penned-in" feeling of frustration of the Mineviller. The urbanite does not do any more things for economic and other reasons but he has the satisfaction of knowing that they are easily available, whereas the Mineviller has no convenient alternative than to associate with the same people, to see very much the same things, and to indulge in what appear to him to be the same leisure-time activities, day in and day out. Against this he reacts, and the values accruing from long association with the same persons and things he tends to ignore until they are denied him.

Perhaps we are safe in the conjecture that Mineville is an average American small town of the present day. It is obviously less progressive than some of them and far ahead of others. It is in a state which is one vast constellation of small towns and does not appear to be unusual among them. It is so far ahead of a large share of those in the south as to suggest that there are wide regional differences in the progressiveness of small towns. But as yet we have little more than common-sense information upon such matters. Neither do we have conclusive evidence as to the progressiveness of cities as a whole relative to small towns as a whole. Blinded by evidences of large-scale progress in their midst, urbanites lose sight of the equally large-scale conservatism which their cities harbor, and proceed to think of conservatism as a trait relatively peculiar to the small town. The case of Mineville seems to show that some village dwellers may justly resent the imputation, although it is true that we must await extensive studies of both cities and small towns before we can be sure of our ground. To date there has been a tendency to judge communities on a basis of but a few of the vast multitude of factors which go to make them up. Hence any or-

dinary community has been judged progressive or "behind the times," according to the bias of the appraiser. In this lack of perspective the small town seems to have had the worst of it. The inclination has been to ignore the extremely wide individual differences between the progressiveness of small towns, and to place all of them in one category. Cities, being more uniformly progressive, have suffered much less by such a generalizing process.

Historically, the small town's unfortunate reputation was justified, but with the annihilation of space by modern inventions the situation is changing. The extent to which Mineville is a telescoped picture of the material and non-material progress in the world today is a striking index of the power of communication. Not only are the people of Mineville constantly reaching toward the outside world for new things, but the outside world exercises an avowed pressure to force changes to occur in the little town. The United States is becoming one great community in which, with little delay, an obscure western village buried high in the Rocky Mountains may partake of the fruits of the whole nation and of the world.

#### THE RAPIDLY CHANGING DRAMA

A community is a fluid, ongoing affair. Even a small town such as Mineville is by no means the static thing it is usually thought to be. Despite the fact that it does not gain in population, its social composition is constantly changing. Boys and girls grow to manhood and womanhood; about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent of the people die each year; there is always an influx of newcomers and the departure of residents; and the people are kept busy in attempting to be up to date as to the different rôles one another is playing in the community life. Former residents who return after an absence of ten years express



sadness at the number of old landmarks who have died or departed, and at the number of strange faces owing to accumulation of newcomers and to the fact that practically all the children and youth have changed beyond recognition. Externally, the little town appears to be monotonously the same from year to year, but internally, among the personalities, the changing drama does much to make it replete with interest for the residents even though some of them complain: "This town is so boring! The same faces, the same buildings, the same trees! Everything the same as long as you live."<sup>1</sup>

Some students make much of the notion that change goes on so slowly in the small town that its people are not kept alert and progressive. They neglect the fact that a very large share of the changes which occupy the attention of a small-town resident are in the world outside his own community. They tend to confuse breath-taking physical change with the change that actually takes place within personalities; they forget the monotonies in the routine life of

<sup>1</sup> The participating investigator cannot avoid a deep feeling toward some of the changes. During the course of the present study five persons who gave from one to three afternoons or evenings in its behalf passed away in death. The writer had known them all of his life. Two evenings he spent in the pioneer cabin home of Johnnie Gulliver, who also made a special trip to Crystal City with him in the interests of this study. One spring day the old man's death was data for the study as truly as was information he had furnished.

More than five who are now dead gave their time but the others were unaware of their services. Then there were twelve persons who gave generously of their assistance and many more who unwittingly helped, all of whom have departed from the community. This rapidly changing drama complicated the problem of research, especially since most of these people were prominent. Very complex adjustments often followed the death or departure of persons—adjustments which sometimes occurred slowly and which an investigator would not fully understand for months.



the average city dweller; they neglect the narrowing influence of a dearth of intimate and a seeming overbalanced amount of superficial contacts in the social diet of so many urbanites who starve from need of intimate association outside the home. Indeed, of Mineville's many residents who once were city dwellers few seem to disagree with the man who said:

You get to know five to ten times as many people in Mineville as you get to know in a city. In a city you don't see the same people often enough to know many of them by sight, much less to really know them as you do here. In the ten years that I was in Chicago I'll bet that I didn't get to know one hundred and fifty people the way I know folks here, and I didn't know them all at the same time. Why, I'll bet I know over two thousand in this county and I'm nothing unusual. Unless city people have money they lead a narrow life. They do just as I did. I associated with people in my own little groups and I stayed within those groups pretty much. You can go into different kinds of groups in a city all right but most of the city people have neither money, time, nor inclination to step out of a few groups—especially after they have settled down in life. It doesn't mean a thing to wait on two thousand people in a day in a city bank. You might as well shovel two thousand shovelfuls of manganese for all the broadening it does for you. No, sir! You make and break contacts so fast in a city that they don't leave much with you. There is plenty in this town to exercise all the brain power of the average person if he has a job that requires thinking and tries to do a little thinking on the side.

Because of the small number of social elements involved, change within his immediate environment is not bewildering to the Mineviller, but it is sufficiently rapid that he is in no danger of mental stagnation. The local changes he sees are changes in things he knows something about and a large share of which create live issues; whereas the city dweller remains oblivious to all except an infinitesimal part of those

which go on about him. After all, there are psychological limitations to the amount of responding of which human beings are capable and it is the amount of live issues arising which determines the extent of thinking done—there being plenty of these in the small town of Mineville, particularly since the community in which its people live is not limited to the square mile of the city limits but really reaches to the four corners of the earth.

#### THE FUTURE OF MINEVILLE

The prosperity of Mineville's first fifty years—from 1865 to 1917—was built mainly upon its rich silver mines. Thus far the second fifty years has been a period of manganese exploitation, and the indications are that the manganese deposits will not be exhausted until the town is a hundred years old—1965—and maybe not then if more is discovered. Meanwhile, if the price of silver recovers, a silver boom is certain to come. One mining company has large bodies of silver ore ready to be mined and has plans in readiness to construct a mill; another company not only has an enormous quantity of ore but has a mill already constructed. No one knows how long the silver ore of the district will last, although a mining-company superintendent has ridiculed the notion that Minevillers will not be mining silver ore in 2400 A.D. Extreme booms and depressions will perhaps always be characteristic of the community as long as it depends largely upon fluctuating values of metals and hidden bodies of ore. Just as unanticipated manganese exploitation suddenly transformed Mineville from a silver camp into a bustling manganese center with a national reputation in the decade following the war, so the enormous phosphate deposits of the locality may some day make the town known prin-

cipally as a source of phosphate. Moreover, no one knows what other minerals may be discovered in commercial quantities. But, all things considered, Mineville does not promise ever to be larger than it has been in the past. And if mining passes from the picture in the far-distant future, the little town may be perhaps a third its present size as a farm-trading center—a humble fate, indeed, for a town which has had and for a long time will continue to have romantic hopes for exciting industrial activity.

On the human side, it would be strange were not 1981 to find twenty-five or fifty of Mineville's present residents within its midst. And there is no reason for supposing that "small-town stuff" will not be very much the same as it is today aside from the changes occasioned by further and further participation of the people in the activities of the larger world by such means as general use of airplanes, television, and other products of man's inventive genius.



## INDEX





## INDEX

- Acquaintanceship, the range of, 124 ff.
- Age: age distribution of children, 227; growing older, 363 f.; old age, 364 ff.
- Airplanes, 387
- Anonymity, impossibility of, 290 f.
- Attitudes toward town; the booster, 35 ff.; the dissatisfied, 41 ff.; the resigned, 40 ff.; the satisfied, 37 ff.
- Automobile: number per family, 383; and isolation, 384 f.; influence on horse business, 383; and outside competition, 384; influence on sex diversions, 247, 251; influence on exogamy, 261 f.
- Band, 273 ff., 288
- Bathtubs, 388 ff.
- Boosters, sincere and insincere, 35-37
- Boy Scouts, 276
- Business: keen competition on Main Street, 57 f.; failures due to intimacy, 150 f. *See* Leadership
- California craze, lure and disappointment, 50 f.
- Card parties: case study of three bridge parties, 164 ff.; profit-making, 289
- Children, chap. xii; age distribution, 227; number per family, 215 ff.; juvenile delinquency, 195 f.; playground, 230 f.; gangs, 230 ff.; work, 241; children's gossip, 135
- Church, chap. xvii; strength of various denominations, 343 ff.; organizations, 348 ff.; leaders, 345 ff.; prejudice, 352 ff.; non-churchgoers, 354 f.; future of church, 355 ff.
- Cities: larger centers toward which Mineville looks, 10-13; prestige of, 11, 12
- Community consciousness: the mining complex, 17-22; Mineville pattern of mind, 31-32; contact with departed families, 215
- Cost of living: most persistent problem, 52; necessary cost, 52 f.; little work for women, 213
- Credit, greatest worry of the business man, 55 ff.
- Crystal, the Ghost City, 27-30
- Cultural heritages, Mineville's heterogeneous stock, 31-34
- Dancing: importance in Mineville, 253 ff.; main dances of year, 288 f.; sex stimulation, 254 ff.
- Death: a community event in Mineville, 368 ff.; funerals as social events, 374 ff.; prominent place in life of Mineviller, 378 ff.; the graveyard, 373 f., 380 f.
- Diffusion, intimacy and, 399. *See* Nationalities
- Economic crises: the panic of 1893, 29 f.; farm failures, 25-26; bank failures, 58 ff. *See also* Industry, Instalment buying
- Education: the educated class, 152 f.; percentage of college-trained youth, 259 f.; Philosophical Club, 278 f.; number college graduates, 401. *See* Schools
- Electricity, mechanical inventions, 382 ff.
- Employer-employee relations; corporation domination, 66 ff.; labor organization, 69; wages, 69 f.

- Family, chap. xi; automobiles per family, 383; number and size of, 215 ff.; influence of intermarried families, 212 f.; marriage, 223 f.; divorce, 223 f.; extra-marital sex relations, 220 ff.
- Farming: Mineville's farming area, 6; farm products, 15; failures, 25 f.
- Firemen, 275 f.
- Gambling: laws against, unenforced, 188, 194; boys and gambling, 256
- Gangs, Mineville's gangs, 230 ff.; 257 ff.
- Gossip, chap. vii; who are the gossipers? 128 ff.; how fast gossip travels, 136 f.; the town's notorious scandals, 141 f.; fear of gossip, 142 f.; gossip an accessory to reading, 175 f.; gossiping centers, 282
- Groups: inventory of groups, chap. xiv; permanent and formal groups, 264 ff.; temporary and informal groups, 280 ff.
- Health: major diseases, 360 ff.; industrial accidents, 63; clinic for children, 228; venereal disease control, 201; gossip and health, 228 ff.
- Heroes: Mineville's only hero, 19; familiarity breeds contempt instead of hero worship, 107 f.
- Hinterland: Mineville's hinterland, 7-10; conflict between Mineville and her satellites, 8-9
- Home talent: the musicians, 153 f.; the male quartet, 280 f.
- Homes: appearance of, 4-6; ownership, rents and value of homes, 54
- Honesty, the town "crooks," 148 f. *See* Rotary
- Hopefulness, of community prosperity, 14
- Incomes: outstanding and average, 146; richest man in town, 173; women unable to help, 213
- Indians, an early-day massacre, 19-20
- Industrial accidents and poor relief: compensation, 63 f.; community aid, 70 f.
- Industry: wide fluctuation in activity, 22 ff., 62 f.; instability discourages building of homes, 54
- Instalment buying: automobiles, 383 f.; stocks and bonds, 61 f.
- Investments: mining ventures, 21 f.; stocks and bonds, 61 f.
- Isolation: two phases of isolation, 111; a clergyman's isolation, 112 f.; other cases of isolation, 113 ff.; the mentally unbalanced, 121; isolation amid intimacy, 123; the "good girl," 252
- Law enforcement: peculiar difficulties in a small town, chap. x; the town policeman, 187; the sheriff, 188; the small-town jury, 206 f.; prohibition, 189 ff.; gambling, 188, 194; strangers and crime, 196, 205-6; juvenile delinquency, 195 f.
- Leadership: and social change, 393 ff.; school boards, 333 ff.
- Lodges: and sleep, 98; inventory of, 264 ff.
- Magazines, magazine reading taste, 182 ff.
- Main Street: a newcomer's first view, 4; type of buildings, 7; Main Street at different hours of the day, 93 ff.
- Marriages: and divorce, 223 f.; exogamy, 261 f.; old maids, 262 f.; charivaris and showers, 289
- Mining: the first discovery, 3; Mineville's basic industry, 13-15; cyclical activity, 24-25; machinery, 392
- Monotony: "Mineville sleeping sickness," 45 ff.; city versus small-town monotony, 75 f.; dancing, 253; petting, 246; danger of mental stagnation, 405 ff.

- Moonshine joints: leisure-time resorts, 97; status of moonshiners, 281. *See* Prohibition
- Nationalities: intimacy fosters assimilation, 33 f.; intimacy hinders assimilation, 157 f.; intimacy fosters uniformity of culture, 105 f.
- Neighborhoods, parts of town, 6
- Neighboring towns. *See* Hinterland, Cities
- Neighborliness: and poor relief, 70 f.; community of interest, 135
- Newcomers: their mistakes, 16-17; discrimination against them, 121 f. *See also* Stranger
- Newspapers: peculiar function of local weekly, 8, 176 ff., 207; out-of-town dailies, 182
- Objectivity, Minevillers are objective to their town, 34, 42 ff.
- Old-timers: who they are, 18; isolation of, 114 f., 124 f. *See* Age
- Opportunities, complaint at lack of, 260 f.
- Petting parties, sex satisfaction and seduction, 246 ff.
- Picnics, 288
- Politics, chap. xv; non-rational nature of, 296 ff.; corruption in small-town politics, 324, 326; strong feeling toward county candidates, 9; county commissioners, 278; city council, 278; list of issues, 303 f., 316 ff.; a political battle, 306 ff.; city elections, 319 ff.; the office-holder, 322 ff.
- Pool halls, leisure-time resorts, 97, 281 f.
- Population: ups and downs in population, 22-24; contrasted to neighboring towns, 26-27
- Privacy: rebellion at lack of privacy, 101 f., 108 f.; how everyone finds out your business in a small town, 102 ff., 138 f.
- Prohibition, Mineville very wet, 189 ff.
- Prospector, his peculiar psychology, 20-21
- Prostitution, local girls, 248 f. *See* Redlight district
- Races, race no problem, 156 f.
- Radio, 386 f.
- Railroads, coming of the railroad, 77 f., 382
- Reading, chap. ix; reading habits: newspapers, magazines, books, 174 ff.
- Redlight district, revenue from, 194. *See* Prostitution
- Refrigeration, 388, 391
- Rotary: insincerity unearthed, 36; rôle in town, 268 ff.
- Routine of life: round of events in the past, 76 ff.; the yearly cycle of events, 78 ff.; community events which occur by seasons, 82 ff.; monthly events, 85 ff.; the daily routine of the average Mineville woman, 89 f.; the man's daily routine, 90 ff.; Main Street at the different hours of the day, 93 ff.
- Rumor: good and hard times rumors, 63; critical attitude toward, 137 f.
- Schools, chap. xvi; junior play, senior play, commencement exercises, junior prom, alumni dance, 79 f.; hazing, 81; school organizations, 276 f.; enrolment, 288
- Sickness, chap. xviii; gossip and sickness, 362
- Single men: scarcity of women during pioneer days, 76; life of, 219 ff.
- Small-town mind, preference for small towns, 49, 110
- Social change, chap. xix; mechanical inventions, 382 ff.; leadership and social change, 322 ff., 393 ff.; rapidity of change, 405 ff.
- Sports: seasonal sports, 83 ff.; children's sports, 230 ff., 242; sex and sports, 246; high-school teams, 242, 342

Status, chap. viii; not closely related to location of home, 6; "making good," 145 ff.; good and bad habits, 148; the town "crooks," 148 f.; the liked and disliked people, 151 f.; the generous and the "tight-wads," 152; the bright and balanced and the mentally lacking, 152 f.; extremes of physical form, condition, and appearance, 154 f.; best and most poorly dressed residents, 155; the social scale, 155 ff.; the "400," 159 ff.; among children, 226; among youth, 258; status of moonshiners, 190 ff., 281

Strangers: and crime, 196, 205-6; discrimination against, 121 f.

Telephones, 387 f.

Traffic laws, unenforced, 197 f.

Washing machines, 390

Woman's Club, rôle in community, 272 f.

Work: Minevillers are hard workers, 74; few opportunities for women, 213; children and work, 241; youth and work, 244; influence upon number of old maids, 263

Working conditions: romance of mine, 64 f.; mines contrasted with farms, 65 f.



